

SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF OTHERS: UNDERSTANDING “STUDENTS’ RIGHT TO  
THEIR OWN LANGUAGE” THROUGH AN ALTERNATE FRAME

BY

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**SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF OTHERS: UNDERSTANDING “STUDENTS’ RIGHT TO  
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## **ABSTRACT**

In 1974, the Conference on College Composition and Communication passed “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” (SRTOL), a statement which encouraged teachers of English to “have the experiences and training that will enable them” to value the dialects and cultures that their students bring into the classroom. Since the passage of this document, critics have debated if, how and why SRTOL can be implemented in the classroom. This dissertation seeks to expand the understanding of “Students Right to Their Own Language” by examining how the document speaks on behalf of teachers and students and the implications of doing so. I argue that by understanding how the CCCC speaks on behalf of others, we can better understand the sociopolitical implications of speaking on behalf of others.

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strongly suggested I submit a proposal to discuss “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” at the 2007 CCCC conference, which I did. Additionally, Dr. Monberg introduced me to Dr. Ellen Cushman, who, in the discussion of my project with her, asked me questions that were relevant to my dissertation and are implicitly and explicitly explored. Perhaps the most important question is this: Do you think the debate over “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” stems from the difficulty people have in interpreting the function and genre of the document? Believe it or not that question then led me to consider how genres contribute to speaking on behalf of others, and this then led to the genesis of this project.

I would be remiss if I didn’t thank my father, who passed away in August of 2011. In fact, I dedicate this dissertation to him.

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**Introduction:  
Understanding the Necessity of “Students’ Right to Their Own Language”**

This dissertation is about speaking on behalf of others and how it is done in “Students’ Right to Their Own Language,” a resolution/position statement produced by the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). Approved by the CCCC in 1974, SRTOL advocated that teachers respect the dialects students bring to the classroom. This controversial document, contrary to popular belief, did not *insist* that teachers engage in the explicit teaching of dialect nor did it call for teachers to dismiss outright the teaching of “standard” English<sup>1</sup>; rather, SRTOL encouraged teachers to become more informed about linguistics and to find ways to work with dialect speakers in a thoughtful and respectful manner (McPherson, “Language” 75-76). Here is the resolution:

We affirm the students' right to their own patterns and varieties of language--the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style. Language scholars long ago denied that the myth of a standard American dialect has any validity. The claim that any one dialect is unacceptable amounts to an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another. Such a claim leads to false advice for speakers and writers and immoral advice for humans. A nation proud of its diverse heritage and its cultural and racial variety will preserve its heritage of dialects. We affirm strongly that teachers must have the experiences and training that will enable them to respect diversity and uphold the right of students to their own language. (710-11)<sup>2</sup>

SRTOL thus serves as a tool for advocacy. SRTOL advocates for students by insisting that teachers and school systems respect students’ language practices; additionally, SRTOL advocates for teachers by insisting that teachers have the training to help them work with

linguistically diverse populations. To do this, the writers of the document spoke on behalf of these groups, articulating their thoughts, opinions, and experiences. This dissertation will go into detail about how SRTOL does this, while also, and more generally, exploring the implications of speaking on behalf of others.

To understand why the CCCC felt the need to advocate for others, it is important to understand how SRTOL relates to educational policies and practices in the United States. First and foremost, SRTOL is an American document. Not only is it produced by an American organization, but it deals with quintessential American issues experienced during the 1960s and 1970s: issues related to diversity, racism, standardized testing, integration, and assimilation of students into the classroom. In fact, in important ways SRTOL is a reflection of and a response to the Civil Rights and Black Power movements of the 1970s. And it is an implicit repudiation of the lesser known Hawaiian Standard English School Program, while also serving as a precursor to the 1979 “Ann Arbor” case.

In 1979, Judge Charles Joiner ruled in favor of eleven African American families who accused administrators and teachers at Martin Luther King, Jr., Elementary School in Ann Arbor, Michigan of routinely placing those who spoke African American English Vernacular (AAEV) in special education classes and wrongly labeling some of the children learning disabled. (Labov 167-68; 193). Most importantly, the attorneys representing the families successfully proved that the negative attitudes teachers and administrators had towards AAEV impeded the students’ academic success. As stated by Judge Joiner: “Research indicates that the black dialect or vernacular used at home by black students in general makes it more difficult for such children to read because of teachers’ unconscious but evident attitudes toward the home language causes a psychological barrier to learning by the student” (qtd. in Ball and Lardner 473). The teachers’



attitudes, both evident and unconscious, centered upon the belief that AAEV was nothing more than faulty English and was a reflection of intellectual inferiority. This seemingly was verified through the Wepman test, which today describes itself as a test that can assess “the child’s ability to recognize the fine differences between phonemes used in English speech. The examiner reads aloud forty pairs of words, and the child indicates, verbally or gesturally, whether the words in each pair are the same or different” (Western Psychological Services). According to William Labov, the problem with the test given to the Ann Arbor children was that it “included a number of oppositions that are mergers in Black English Vernacular: *pin* vs. *pen*, *sheaf* vs. *sheath*, *clothe* vs. *clove* and so forth” (169). In other words, the children were unable to make distinctions between each pair of words because these words are (practically) homonyms in AAEV. Thus, it was not surprising that the school had initially labeled the children “retarded” and had misdiagnosed them as having hearing difficulties (Kaiser C4).

Of course, the problems associated with the testing of dialect speakers are addressed in SRTOL. For example, readers of SRTOL will notice that in a section on standardized testing, SRTOL criticizes standardized test designers for assuming that everyone uses the same dialect, comes from the same socioeconomic background, and has the same life experiences. The CCCC points out that people interpreting test results “must recognize the biases built into the tests and be aware of the purpose behind the tests. Used carelessly, standardized tests lead to erroneous inferences as to students’ linguistic abilities and create prejudgments in the minds of teachers, counselors, future employers, and the students themselves” (720). Thus, a student who comes from a home in which the family uses the words “cabinet” and “pop” should not be penalized for not knowing what cupboards and soda are. Likewise, a student who says, “I am making groceries” should not be considered intellectually inferior because the student does not say, “I

am going to the grocery store.” Yet, standardized tests penalize students because they do not conform to the “knowledge” the standardized tests say students should have.

While the “Students’ Right” document preceded the Ann Arbor case, it nonetheless anticipated what happened at Martin Luther King, Jr., Elementary School. Administrators and teachers interpreting the Wepman and other tests enrolled, or tried to enroll, “five students in classes and programs for the mentally handicapped” and enrolled, or attempted to enroll, “two [students] in classes for learning disabled children.” Moreover, court documents show that three students “were tracked . . . at lower levels of group instruction” and several were unable to progress to higher grades (Labov 168). According to William Labov, Geneva Smitherman, who served as an expert witness for the plaintiffs, was well aware of the “linguistic problems in the tests”; she was also aware, according to Labov, that school reports showed that teachers and administrators unknowingly used characteristics of AAEV in justifying the placement of the students (Labov 170).

Of course, this wasn’t the first time that standardized tests had been used against students who were linguistically different from the norm. In 1920, white middle-class parents in Honolulu, Hawaii insisted territorial officials create an educational system that separated English-speaking students from those not considered proficient in standard English. Known as English Standard schools, these schools were established all over Hawaii, starting in 1924. Legally, English Standard schools could not discriminate against the majority non-white population, though in reality, they did (Young 120-22). The goals of the schools were to facilitate the learning of standard English speakers without having them exposed to Hawaiian Creole (also referred to as Pidgin) and other languages and to promote the supremacy of American values while downplaying Asian cultural beliefs and practices. To enter an English

Standard school, perspective applicants had to perform well on verbal, and, if applicable, written tests (Hughes 70-76).

The main issue with English Standard schools revolves around the definition of standard English. What is standard English and who has the right to determine who is fluent in standard English? From a theoretical perspective, it is difficult to define standard English. After all, people within one community may pronounce words, construct sentences, use punctuation and employ phrases that deviate from others within the same community. This is why SRTOL discusses the idea of “standard” English being a “myth.” After all, there are New Yorkers who pronounce the “r” at the end of the word “car” and others who do not (Milroy and Milroy 17); there are some Virginians who say, “Whatcha know good?” and others who say, “How are you?” Commonly, many people look at standard English as “written language of established writers [that] is typically codified in English grammar texts. It is perpetuated to a large extent in formal institutions, such as schools, by those responsible for English language education” (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 10). The concept of standard English reflects what James Milroy and Lesley Milroy call the “ideology of standardization.” The ideology of standardization provides justification for teachers, editors, and the like to promote a type of uniformity within language (19).

We can see the ideology of standardization play out in the creation of the English Standard school system. In 1920, the president of the Territorial Normal and Training School in Hawaii described what he termed “Hawaii’s English problem,” which was a listing of what he deemed to be nonstandard English features. According to him, “Inability to hear English sounds correctly, faulty enunciation, a peculiar inflection and the use of certain local idioms are [the] chief characteristics [of the problem]” (qtd. in Tamura, “English Only” 49). He, like the middle-

class parents who complained, never considered the idea that the varying enunciations, inflections, and local idioms might reflect a new form of English—Hawaiian English—a particular standard within a particular community in Hawaii. Instead, parents and some school officials argued that the people of Hawaii needed to sound like the people from the mainland of the United States.

Therefore, students who could not show their fluency in the standard English that territorial officials deemed to be acceptable were forced to attend district schools. Judith Hughes recounts the story of Maemae Elementary School, a district school in Honolulu that was converted into an English Standard school in 1940. The students attending Maemae who wished to stay in the school had to take an entrance exam in which the students had to enunciate words and numbers; modify verb tenses; and read stories. Because three-fourths of the students did not pass the exam, they were expected to transfer from Maemae and continue their education at other district schools (77). When parents petitioned the school officials, parents noted that the

selective grouping of students according to their ability to speak and write the English language is unfair and entirely too prejudicial because it is the duty of your servants in these schools to train the young children in the manner of speaking and writing the English language correctly. This practice should be entirely removed or greatly modified. (qtd. in Hughes 77-78)

Notice that the parents find the testing to be “unfair” and “prejudicial” against their children. It was not that their children did not know English. More than likely, the children probably did. (After all, the district schools emphasized English within their curriculum.) The students probably spoke with an accent and perhaps used grammatical structures that did not conform to what the examiners wanted. In his research on English Standard schools, Morris Young notes

that “examiners were prompted to note errors in the *TH* sound, lip movement and word endings, expression and phrasing” (123-24). Not surprisingly, a 1947 study concluded that “Japanese, Hawaiians, Part-Hawaiians and Filipinos were underrepresented” in the English Standard schools (Hughes 80).

Those attending district schools had teachers who did not understand how to work with linguistically diverse speakers. According to Tamura, there were teachers who belittled Creole and the way students spoke it; and there were other teachers who asked students to teach them Creole so that they as teachers could help students see the differences between Creole and standard English (“Power” 437-38). The latter were teachers who embraced the principles of SRTOL long before SRTOL even came into being.

The Hawaiian school system, however, replicated the sociopolitical structure of Hawaii. Whites (especially those of non-Portuguese heritage) who could speak standard English were on top. The language that they spoke, standard English, represented the “European American oligarchy” that dominated the islands soon after the U.S. overthrew the monarchy in 1893 (Tamura, “Power” 439-40). Those who didn’t speak standard English, especially Native Hawaiians, may have done so out of loyalty for their ancestors, many of whom worked the plantations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Eileen H. Tamura provides a 1934 quote from a young girl who explained the pressure she felt to speak Creole: “If we speak good English, our friends usually say, ‘Oh you’re trying to be hybolic (i.e., to act high and mighty), yeah!’” (qtd. in Tamura, “Power” 440). In addition to creating schools in which standard English reigned supreme, territorial officials also banned foreign-language newspapers, foreign language schools (especially Japanese schools), and the speaking of Hawaiian in schools

(Tamura, “Power” 440-41; Young 118). Thus, speaking Hawaiian Creole served as a means of maintaining a culture that was attacked by territorial officials (Tamura, “Power” 440).

Unfortunately, SRTOL does not specifically reference the educational system in Hawaii. If it had, I believe that those who read the document would have been able to understand better the history of how educational systems in the United States codified linguistic discrimination. The inclusion of Hawaii’s history might not have made opponents accept the document, but it would have at least shown them that the U.S. has a history of institutionalizing linguistic discrimination in schools. Therefore, readers of SRTOL should note that Hawaii systematized across the territory (state) what had been systematized at King Elementary School: the penalization of students who do not speak (or write) standard English.

One of the things I want to highlight about these cases is not just how SRTOL is reflected in them, but also how people speak on behalf of others, especially, it seems, when language issues are prominent. Notice that the parents of the children affected by the tests advocated for them through the judicial system. As explicitly noted in the Hawaii case, those who were not allowed into the Hawaii Standard schools were primarily Hawaiian or Asian children. In the Ann Arbor case, the students who were marginalized from the mainstream were those who came from housing projects. As Geneva Smitherman points out, the Ann Arbor parents “were a small group of single female heads of household, who did not enjoy the support of the other (middle and upper class) Black parents at King School” (*Word* 13). However, in order for the families in both cases to speak on behalf of their children, they had to find lawyers willing to speak on behalf of them.

Speaking on behalf of others occurs in many forms. In this dissertation I highlight two ways in which people speak on behalf of others. The first is through speaking *about* others. In

particular, I emphasize how speaking about others is a form of speaking on their behalf. After all, whenever we discuss who someone is, what someone thinks or values, we speak about that person in such a way that we may, whether we know it or not, speak on his or her behalf (Alcoff 9). Let me offer a more recent example that relates to SRTOL.

In 1996, the Oakland, California United School District Board approved its “Resolution on Ebonics” which called for students to learn standard English even if it meant using Ebonics (another term for AAEV) to do so. Though the school board focused on students learning standard English, the media commentators primarily focused on the teachers teaching Ebonics. In one of several “whereas” clauses that sought to address linguistic differences, the Oakland School Board spoke about students this way:

. . . the standardized tests and grade scores of African American students in reading and language arts skills measuring their application of English skills are substantially below state and national norms and that such deficiencies will be remedied by the application of a program featuring African Language Systems principles in instructing African American children both in their primary language and English. (qtd. in Perry and Delpit 144)

In this passage African American students are described as bilingual. The school board points out that the students speak a “primary language” that is not English. Likewise, the school board asserts that African American students do not test well in English. The students are being described, spoken about, and portrayed. Since readers are not reading what students have to say about themselves, readers must rely on the Oakland School Board to speak about—and thus on behalf of—the students it serves.

Likewise, this resolution also encourages others to speak about and on behalf of people by speaking about their dialect. As Theresa Perry notes, commentators did not discuss the rhetoric of AAEV; rather they focused on grammatical features, which are easier to notice, critique, and stigmatize (Perry 12). Columnist Ellen Goodman described the dialect as a “second-class language for a second-class life” (qtd. in Perry 11); and editorial writer Brent Staples referred to the dialect as “broken English” and “degraded English” (qtd. in Lakoff 241). Linguists who went to the media to counteract these assertions and provide a more complex understanding of dialects, languages, and slang found themselves, in the words of Robin Tolmach Lakoff, “cut off after a few seconds or left to die on the cutting-room floor” (243). In other words, the Ebonics debate really wasn’t much of a debate at all. It was an opportunity for people to voice their opinions on why AAEV was not a legitimate dialect.

Clearly those who speak AAEV may not like my assertion that Ellen Goodman and Brent Staples spoke on their behalf. After all, there had not been a vote in the AAEV-speaking community about who would and could not speak about their community. And to their readers, Goodman and Staples were describing the people they believed AAEV speakers actually to be. Put differently, they were speaking about and on behalf of others without the others’ permission.

Speaking about and on behalf of others happens all the time. Academics speak on behalf of others when they conduct research on and about those of various socioeconomic and cultural groups. Politicians speak on behalf of others when they convey how their constituents feel about a given subject. And religious leaders speak on behalf of others when they convey how God or a prophet might feel about a given behavior.

The second way in which we speak on behalf of others is to speak *for* others. Speaking for others is a form of advocacy. Someone who advocates for a group seeks to help the group



achieve justice. In this respect, the Oakland School Board resolution and SRTOL serve as a means of speaking for others. The Oakland School Board sought to ensure that its students received the funding and the support necessary to help improve their test scores in English. The CCCC sought to ensure that students not be subjected to linguistic discrimination. In fact, part of SRTOL states, “We affirm students’ right to their own patterns and varieties of language—the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identities and styles” (710). Both organizations sought justice for a specific group of people.

Thus, I define speaking on behalf of others as this: speaking on behalf of others is a speaker’s (or writer’s) attempt to describe, define, represent and/or re-present someone else’s values, perspectives, and experiences to an audience that may or may not include the person (or persons) represented.<sup>3</sup> This dissertation will explore, then, how SRTOL not only *speaks about* but also *speaks for* students, teachers, professional organizations, identity communities, and the public at large. Whether spoken about or spoken for, these groups, I argue, find themselves nonetheless being spoken on behalf of by other people.

Just as SRTOL speaks about and for various groups, the document itself is likewise spoken about and spoken for by many others who wish to render it in particular ways. For example, the CCCC, because it commissioned the SRTOL statement, necessarily had to speak both about and for its importance to writing teachers. But as I will show in subsequent chapters, it could not do so without challenge. In fact, many writing teachers disputed how the CCCC described the needs and experiences of both teachers and students. If it seems that the layers of *speaking on behalf of others* are complex, this is because the rhetorical situation that produced and shaped SRTOL is also complex. To illustrate something of this complexity, I now turn attention to the scholar whose theoretical work on the rhetorical situation has been influential.

Lloyd F. Bitzer defines a rhetorical situation as “a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significance modification of the exigence” (“Rhetorical” 6). In paraphrasing this definition, three terms often receive distinct emphasis: exigencies, audience, and constraints. As I intend to show, all three terms bear greatly upon understanding the rhetorical situation within which the SRTOL document emerged. In fact, to understand how Bitzer’s rhetorical situation works in this context, I plan to examine briefly the history of the CCCC, since the organization is considered the author (or speaker) of the “Students’ Right” statement. I will also rely on the accounts of Geneva Smitherman, Stephen Parks, Elisabeth McPherson and others who have written about the history of STROL. Additionally, I will also discuss the events leading up to the formation of the document and the exigencies the document seeks to address. If, as Bitzer tells us, an exigence is “an imperfection marked by urgency; it is a defect, an obstacle” (“Rhetorical” 6), then surely one of the exigencies which led to the formation of the document was the inability of English teachers to work with students who spoke and wrote in dialects other than standard English.

But, in order for English teachers to address this exigence, they also had to address the *constraints* that existed upon the range and kinds of actions available to them. Once they had confronted these constraints, however, they still had to fulfill their “function as mediators of change” (Bitzer, “Rhetorical” 7). In other words, the audience of SRTOL was implored not only to affirm the students’ right to their own language, but also to help “teachers . . . have the experiences and training [that] will enable them” to support this goal (CCCC 711). The debate regarding the acceptance and ultimate effectiveness of SRTOL centered on the primary audience

of college English teachers who were members of the CCCC, but who did not agree with the document; additionally, it also centered on the English teachers who agreed with the document, but believed they were powerless to remove the constraints which made it difficult to apply the document to the classroom. Lastly, the effectiveness of SRTOL centered on how well the CCCC could speak on behalf of its membership. In sum, by studying the rhetorical situation involved in producing SRTOL, we can see the exigencies, the constraints, and the audience(s) which the CCCC encountered. Once we study these features, separately and together, we can better see how the CCCC sought to speak on behalf of its membership and the students it sought to protect.

Not only will I examine the rhetorical situation from Bitzer's perspective, but I will also incorporate the theories of Linda Alcoff and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, two individuals who have theorized about the issues involved on speaking on behalf of others. To be precise, Bitzer's rhetorical situation will serve as an analytic framework for my dissertation and Alcoff and Spivak will serve as the theoretical articulation of the problem of speaking for others. Alcoff's and Spivak's theories help readers understand the social dimensions of speaking on behalf of others—that is, who has the power and the right to speak on behalf of others. To offer concrete examples of Alcoff's and Spivak's ideas, I will discuss Jacqueline Jones Royster's article, "When the First You Hear Is Not Your Own" and Rigoberta Menchú's testimonio, *I, Rigoberta: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*. Though Royster's article and Menchú's work do not explicitly theorize the concept of speaking on behalf of others, both works help give readers a sense of how those who are spoken on behalf of feel about those who speak on behalf of them.

Thus, I have four goals for my dissertation: 1) to demonstrate how one important (but unaddressed) concern in making the SRTOL document was the problem of speaking on behalf of others; 2) to demonstrate how the problem of speaking on behalf of others may be illuminated

when regarded through the conceptual framework of the rhetorical situation; 3) to examine how the SRTOL document was shaped by the rhetorical situation within which it emerged; and 4) to reveal how this particular rhetorical situation motivated people to speak on behalf of others, and in some measure, had a determinative effect on what they said in the document itself.

### Methodology:

To accomplish my goals, I intend to discuss the concept of speaking for others as it pertains to SRTOL. Because the problem of speaking for others has been central to postcolonial and feminist studies, but not Rhetoric and Composition, I intend to show why it is necessary for the field of Rhetoric and Composition to pay more attention to the repercussions we face when we speak on behalf others, especially if those “others” are part of our primary audience. In fact, it seems that the field of Rhetoric and Composition has focused more on audience generally and not at all on the problem of *speaking on behalf of one audience to another audience*. For example, one of the more famous (and frequently cited) articles dealing with audiences is “Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked: The Role of Audience in Composition Theory” by Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford. They discuss the historical distinctions between “audience addressed” and “audience invoked” and the merging of these two audiences. What they don’t do, however, is address the problems inherent in the invoking and addressing of audiences when speaking on behalf of others.

Ede and Lunsford describe “audience addressed” as an audience that the writer knows well—if not personally, then demographically. The writer knows the audience’s ideological beliefs, age, religion, educational background, et cetera, and can take all of this information into consideration when writing a text. They use the term “audience invoked” to describe the audience the writer imagines, and that through various rhetorical strategies, might even actualize

into existence (78-83). We can see an example of “audience addressed” and “audience invoked” in the background statement and bibliography CCCC commissioned to justify the actual resolution/position statement to the teachers reading the piece. Here is what the SRTOL Committee wrote:

The members of the Committee realized that the resolution would create controversy and that without a clear explanation of the linguistic and social knowledge on which it rests, many people would find it [SRTOL] incomprehensible. Therefore members of the Executive Committee requested a background statement which would examine some common misconceptions about language and dialect, define some key terms, and provide some suggestions for sounder, alternative approaches. (711)

Not only does the CCCC recognize that its primary audience may be confused or baffled by the actual resolution/position statement, but it also anticipates what it needs to do to ameliorate the confusion. The CCCC simultaneously addresses the audience by explaining why the resolution is needed and invokes an audience when it not only imagines how the audience may react, but also attempts to counteract the audience’s reaction by creating this background statement. By simultaneously engaging in the process of invoking an audience and addressing an audience, the CCCC essentially sees itself as being able to speak on behalf of an audience. It could do this because it knew how to address the audience and it thought it would be able to persuade the audience to support the position statement. Perhaps that is why the organization wrote in the actual resolution/position statement: “We affirm the students’ right to their own language. . . . We affirm strongly that teachers must have the experiences and training that will enable them to respect diversity and uphold the right of students to their own language” (710-

11). Notice that the resolution itself does not contain any hint of conflict among the membership; it is the background statement which hints that the members may not understand or may not agree with the document. The assumption is that everyone in the membership can see objectively the linguistic oppression that exist in society and thus the urgent exigence that compels action.

In order to fully understand the concept of speaking for others in this context, I intend to examine the literature that addresses the formation of SRTOL. To this end, I want to do something that others have not done: examine these histories as repositories from which to glean the rhetorical situation that shaped the document. My dissertation, however, will highlight how the exigencies that existed within the rhetorical situation motivated the CCCC to speak on behalf of its membership and of the students. Readers will thus understand how the rhetorical situation shaped the formation and reception of SRTOL, the exigencies that motivated the CCCC to want to speak on behalf of others and the implications, both disciplinary and pedagogical, of the CCCC's speaking on behalf of two distinct but related groups (of teachers and students). Likewise, readers will understand how the rhetorical audiences reacted to the CCCC and the way in which they responded by speaking on behalf of themselves and others.

My first chapter will provide the theoretical background on the concept of speaking for others, especially as this concept has been conceived in the specialties of Postcolonial theory and Women's Studies. To do this, I will use the works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Linda Alcoff to help readers understand the complexities of speaking on behalf of others, and I will use texts by Royster and Menchú as works that exemplify the implications of doing so.

While Alcoff's and Spivak's theories are the foundation for understanding the repercussions for speaking on behalf of others, they do not help readers understand fully why people choose to engage in this process. Thus, I will argue that Bitzer's rhetorical situation can

be used as a necessary complement to Alcoff's and Spivak's theories. After all, speaking on behalf of others is not just a theoretical concept. It is a rhetorical act. Bitzer's theory can help readers understand how this rhetorical act is carried out in situations in which people speak for others. We can examine constraints that may help or impede the rhetorical audience from accepting the way in which speaker speaks on behalf of others. Likewise, we can examine how the rhetorical audience might respond and accept (or not accept) to the way in which speaker speaks on behalf of it.

In order to examine the concept of the CCCC's speaking for others, I devote chapter two towards examining briefly the literature on the history of the CCCC and its construction of SRTOL. To achieve this historical perspective, I will rely on Stephen Parks's *Class Politics: The Movement for the Students' Right to Their Own Language*; several essays by Geneva Smitherman, including "The Historical Struggle for Language Rights in the CCCC" and "'Students' Right to Their Own Language': A Retrospective"; and other books, articles, and scholarship that provides us with an historical overview of the document. Likewise, I will examine articles by supporters and opponents of the documents. This will help readers understand better the various issues supporters and opponents highlighted within SRTOL. All of these works provide us with valuable historical scholarship on the societal issues that led to the formation of the document, as well as subsequent attempts to enact SRTOL in our pedagogies. By examining the formation and application of SRTOL, I will be able to further discuss the exigencies and potential remedies the writers saw SRTOL addressing.

After establishing the theoretical basis for the problem of speaking for others, and after reviewing the extant histories on the SRTOL document, I will then move to an analysis of this document using Bitzer's rhetorical situation as my framework. To be precise, I will devote each

subsequent chapter to one of the three characteristics that Bitzer identifies as components of the rhetorical situation: exigencies, audiences, and constraints. I will then offer a concluding discussion that looks at the implications of my analysis.

In chapter three, then, I will discuss Bitzer's rhetorical situation and focus on his discussion of exigence. I will point out a major problem with his theory: Bitzer does not focus on how the rhetor's identity can either influence or discourage a rhetorical audience from addressing the exigence. Though I rely on Alcoff's, Spivak's and Royster's discussions on identity, I will discuss the importance of James Paul Gee's theory of institutional identity and affinity identity and how these identities contribute to how the CCCC interprets itself as an organization that can speak on behalf of others. Then I will show the relationship between how the CCCC perceives its institutional and affinity identity and how it shapes the way in which it frames the exigencies in SRTOL.

Chapter four will examine Bitzer's concept of the rhetorical audience. To understand how the rhetorical audience and other audiences responded to the rhetorical exigencies, I will use chapter four to examine articles and letters to editors regarding SRTOL to see how writers felt about the CCCC's position and how they responded to the CCCC speaking on their behalf. I will discuss how Alcoff's and Spivak's theories can be used to understand how the critics responded to the way in which the CCCC spoke on behalf of them and how they, as critics, speak on behalf of others. Thus, this chapter will help readers better understand the implications of speaking on behalf of others. Likewise, I will use chapter four to discuss affinity identities and how the rhetorical audience created their own affinity identities based on their support and opposition to SRTOL. Understanding affinity identities can help readers visualize how the rhetorical defined



the role of English teacher. Moreover, this chapter will show how supporters and opponents speak about the opposing group and speak on behalf of their own affinity group.

In the fifth chapter, I will discuss how Bitzer defines constraints and point to various constraints that existed which prevented the rhetorical audience from modifying the exigencies. These constraints included a politically conservative political climate that clashed with the progressive principles within SRTOL and the attempts to rescind SRTOL. Additionally, I will discuss the success and failures of SRTOL based on the way in which the CCCC spoke on behalf of its members and students. I will point out how SRTOL is important because it publically acknowledges the linguistic diversity of the country; the potential for linguistic domination; the need for teacher training; and the fact that students come into the classroom speaking “dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style” (710). In many ways, STROL brings up the issues of who has the right to not only to enter the classroom but also who has the right to determine how one should speak in the classroom. Most importantly, by studying the history and the responses of SRTOL we can better gauge how the CCCC sought to speak on behalf of its membership and on behalf of the students who did not speak standard English. Using SRTOL, I will examine the positive and negative implications of the CCCC speaking on behalf of others and discuss ways in which the CCCC can create documents that will allow a space for members to disagree. To create these documents, I will show how the CCCC should think about addressing exigencies by examining how it engages in rituals of speaking, positionality, and representation.

In my conclusion, I will apply what we can learn from the theoretical understandings of speaking on behalf of others to pedagogy. I will explore how teachers speak on behalf of others in the classroom through the use of various pedagogical techniques such as the Socratic method

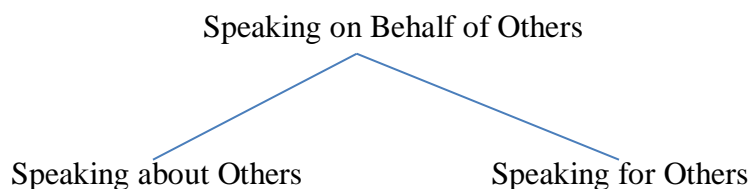
and rivaling. I will argue that teachers need to be cognizant of how they speak on behalf of others and encourage students to do the same.

Hopefully, this dissertation will shed light on how the field of Rhetoric and Composition engages in speaking for others. After all, many of us who teach in the field regularly engage in speaking for others in academia. Sometimes we play “devil’s advocate” during a classroom debate; sometimes we write articles or attend conferences in which we talk about and talk for first generational students or working class students, though we ourselves may not necessarily fit into these categories. In fact, speaking for others is so commonplace, we may not necessarily think about speaking for others as a rhetorical action. My dissertation, however, will examine a situation in which the field of Rhetoric and Composition needed to be cognizant of when, how, and why it spoke for its members and students. While the “success” of the document is debatable, what we do know is this: its acceptance as a document among teachers was dependent on how well the committee who created the document could represent (and/or re-present) the ideologies regarding language use and teaching among its members; and its legacy as a document is based on how it attempted to protect students, and, in some ways, speak on behalf of them by advocating that students be allowed to use their own voices—their own dialects—in the classroom.

## Chapter One: The Problem of Speaking on Behalf of Others

### What Does It Mean to Speak on Behalf of Others?

I define *speaking on behalf of others* as a speaker's (or writer's) attempt to describe, define, represent and/or re-present someone's (or a group's) theories and experiences to an audience.<sup>4</sup> The concept of *speaking on behalf of others* can be represented like this:



As this visual representation suggests, speaking on behalf of others can encompass speaking *about* someone and/or speaking *for* someone. In this chapter I will discuss theorists Linda Alcoff, Jacqueline Jones Royster, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. As I develop my chapter, I will write about Alcoff, Royster, and Spivak by describing and defining who they are and what they represent—in other words, I will *speak (or write) about* them. In this respect, by speaking about them and their works, I implicitly speak on their behalf. Why? Because I metaphorically “stand in” for them. While I use direct quotes for the reader to see what Alcoff, Royster, and Spivak “literally” say, I mediate their words and interpret their theories so that I, in the words of Alcoff, “speak in place of them” (9). I cannot do otherwise. In fact, I argue that all writers, including first-year college students, who incorporate reported speech in their writing, whether in the form of primary or secondary sources, always, to some extent, speak on behalf of the people whose words they incorporate in their writing. This, however, does not mean that writers speak for their sources, at least not in the sense of endorsing the positions held by any given source.

I hope not to be misunderstood. Speaking for and speaking about, while related, are nonetheless distinct. When a speaker or writer wishes to advocate or “speak for” a group or an individual—such as when a lawyer advocates for a defendant, or a lobbyist advocates for an organization, or a human rights reporter advocates for a cause—that person is actively engaging in advocacy for a group or individual, not merely just describing and defining experiences and theories. “Speaking for others” always involves advocacy and thus constitutes one form of speaking on behalf of others. In fact, speaking for others cannot help but entail speaking about others. However, it is possible, after all, to speak about others without advocating for them. For example, when I discuss Alcoff, Royster, and Spivak in this chapter, I’m not advocating for a particular cause that they might individually or collectively embrace; and yet, by representing their perspectives, I am speaking on their behalf. To be clear, speaking about others is not the same as speaking for others, but they are interrelated. I speak about Alcoff, Royster and Spivak, but I do not speak for (as in advocate) them.

Like Linda Alcoff, I recognize that the lines between “speaking for others” and “speaking about others” are not firmly drawn. (She does not use the term “speaking on behalf of others.”) Though I make a distinction between these terms, she contemplates the possibility that “speaking for” and “speaking about” others are intertwined:

The conflation of [speaking for and speaking about others is] intentional on my part. There is an ambiguity in the two phrases: when one is speaking for others one may be describing their situation and thus also speaking about them.

Similarly, when one is speaking about others, or simply trying to describe their situation or some aspect of it, one may also be speaking in place of them, that is, speaking for them. (9)

Speaking on behalf of others happens all of the time, especially if we live and work within a culture where people routinely speak about and (unintentionally or intentionally) for others. This is especially true in academia. In classrooms, students talk about how they and their friends feel regarding a particular issue; in faculty meetings, professors discuss how program changes affect students positively or adversely; at university board meetings, administrators discuss how funding (or lack thereof) affects professors and their productivity.<sup>5</sup> I use these examples not only to show how often speaking about/for others is done, but also to show how ordinary, and how readily accepted the concept of speaking on behalf of others is.

A cursory look at academic publications is instructive because here is where speaking on behalf of others is so commonplace that many readers may not even notice it when it occurs. To see how speaking on behalf of others is done in Rhetoric and Composition, for example, I encourage readers of this study to examine the second edition of Victor Villanueva's anthology, *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader*. People interested in Rhetoric and Composition can read essays where writers speak about and for others. Examples include Donald Murray's "Teach Writing as a Process Not Product," in which Murray speaks on behalf of students by describing how students feel when they receive papers back: "Year after year the student shudders under a barrage of criticism, much of it brilliant, some of it stupid, all of it irrelevant" (3); or Walter Ong's "The Writer's Audience Is Always a Fiction" in which Ong talks about and speaks on behalf of writers: "What do we mean by saying the audience is a fiction? Two things at least. First, that the writer must construct in his imagination, clearly or vaguely, an audience cast in some sort of role—entertainment seekers, reflective sharers of experience . . . and so on" (60); or Richard E. Miller's "The Arts of Complicity: Pragmatism and the Culture of Schooling" in which Miller discusses Paulo Freire's influence on teachers in Rhetoric and Composition: "Freire

has given teachers a new way to see themselves as something other than mindless functionaries of the state apparatus responsible for tidying the prose of the next generation of bureaucrats” (656). These examples (and countless others like them) illustrate how speaking on behalf of others is unavoidable in academic discourse and most other discourses as well. Why then should it even be regarded as a problem?

Maybe the reason why I initially read these articles and never noticed the fact that the authors were speaking on behalf of others is because I didn’t see anything controversial in their statements. Like Donald Murray’s student, I too have shuddered when reading criticism given to me by some of my professors. As a writer, I too understand how Ong forms his conclusions about how writers fictionalize audiences. As a teacher and a scholar in Rhetoric and Composition, I too know the influence Freire has had on the field. Perhaps it is safe to say that speaking about or for others is not a problem at all when readers agree or identify with what is said.

But what happens when readers do not identify with what is said and thus do not play the role we expect the reader to play? What about the reader bold enough to ask Donald Murray: “How do you *know* students ‘shudder under a barrage of criticism’?” Or that student who tells Walter Ong, “To be honest, I never think of my audience performing any sort of role at all.” Maybe it is even possible to imagine Paulo Freire disputing Richard Miller’s interpretation of his ideas. After all, scholars and philosophers often complain that their ideas have been misunderstood or misrepresented by others. And while speaking on behalf of others may be an inevitability of academic discourse, and while it may be motivated by a desire to help people understand a different perspective, it is also vulnerable to rhetorical challenges and possible dangers.

This is why it is important to be aware of how one speaks on behalf of others. Writers should reflect on how they speak about others and consider the effects their works might have on the audience, especially if there is a possibility that there might be readers who are part of the group spoken about. Writers need to understand their own ideologies and how these ideologies inform the way writers approach topic. Most importantly, writers should consider the ethical responsibilities of speaking on behalf of others and whether or not they are representing a group fairly.

There are many academics like myself in the field of Rhetoric and Composition who think about issues related to speaking on behalf of/speaking for others. For example, in the Gesa E. Kirsch and Joy S. Ritchie essay, “Beyond the Personal: Theorizing a Politics of Location in Composition Research,” Ritchie writes of how she encouraged two students to coauthor an essay with her because she was afraid of speaking about and for them (12).<sup>6</sup> Kirsch, in a different essay, encourages writers who speak for others to not only understand the power implications of doing so, but to also explain to readers why they need to speak on behalf of others (“Opinion: Multivocal” 198-99). Paul Butler writes of how critics, such as Stanley Fish and Heather Mac Donald who are not in the field of Rhetoric and Composition, end up speaking about and speaking for the field (55-58). Kelvin Monroe in “Writin da Funk Dealer: Songs of Reflections and Reflex/shuns” discusses how he has heard white students define blackness and who is black and who is a “white black person” (107).

Perhaps the field’s best-known article about speaking on behalf of others is Jacqueline Jones Royster’s “When the First Voice You Hear Is Not Your Own.” Royster does an excellent job critiquing the way in which white scholars ignore, misinterpret, or talk over the scholarly and cultural contributions of African Americans in her article. Like the other articles mentioned

before, Royster explores the politics of speaking on behalf of others. I will return to Royster later, but for now, what I wish to point out is that what Royster and other theorists do not do, but what I seek to do in my study, is provide a comprehensive rhetorical understanding of why people engage in speaking on behalf of others.

Much of the research I have found on speaking on behalf of others comes from the fields of women's studies and postcolonial studies. For this project, I will therefore pay close attention to Linda Alcoff and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Their works can help scholars in the field of Rhetoric and Composition better understand the power dynamics that occur among the speaker, audience, context, and the individual/group spoken for in any given situation. In fact, I will use this chapter to help readers understand how Alcoff and Spivak can be used to illuminate speaking on behalf of others within Rhetoric and Composition by putting their texts in conversation with Royster's seminal essay and Rigoberta Menchú's influential testimonio.

### **Speaking about Others**

In my definition of speaking on behalf of others, I note that when speakers engage in this rhetorical act, speakers often "re-present someone's (or a group's) theories and experiences to an audience." Spivak uses the term "re-presentation" (or *Darstellung*) to connote "rhetoric as trope" rather than "rhetoric as persuasion" ("Subaltern" 277). Re-presentation, thus, calls for the speaker to speak *about*, rather than speak *for*, other individuals or groups. As you read the upcoming section, you will see how Royster and Menchú depict various situations. In their depictions, you will notice how the authors choose to highlight certain issues, communities, and individuals over others. These depictions highlight how authors, when speaking about others, have to "[speak] in place" for the people and the communities they describe (Alcoff 9).



*The Speaker and Her Contexts*

Though Alcoff's postcolonial essay, "The Problem of Speaking for Others," does not provide details about why people are *motivated* to speak for others, she does examine who gets to speak for others and why. Influenced by theories of Foucault and Deleuze, Alcoff encourages readers to examine the "rituals of speaking" which involve the speaker's or writer's social identity (which she calls "positionality" or "location") and the "discursive context" (12). The discursive context involves the relationship "between the utterance/text and other utterances and texts as well as the material practices in the relevant environment" (12). In other words, the discursive context entails understanding the utterance made by the speaker, how it was made, and what influenced the speaker to make the utterance and shape the utterance as he or she did. Understanding how the rituals of speaking operate can influence how the listener perceives the speaker's truths (12-13). Additionally, rituals of speaking also involve a hierarchy and a power struggle among those who speak, listen, and are spoken of. Alcoff writes, "Who is speaking, who is spoken of, and who listens is a result, as well as an act, of political struggle" (15). Alcoff further reminds readers that speakers have to seem credible in order for the audience to value the speakers' points; additionally, speakers have to be accountable for what they say about others and when they speak on others' behalf (13-16).

When someone speaks about others, that speaker is doing so with the assumption that he or she is an "expert" on the person or group he or she speaks on behalf of. I put the word "expert" in quotation marks because what makes someone an expert about a particular culture, group, or individual is debatable. For example, Maxine Hairston, in her infamous 1992 article, "Diversity, Ideology, and the Teaching of Writing," criticized James Berlin, Patricia Bizzell,

John Trimbur, and others for teaching college students political and cultural studies rather than writing and critical thinking (698-70). Not surprisingly, those who pedagogically side with Berlin, Bizzell, and Trimbur wrote to the journal that published her article defending them (and others like them) against what they saw as Hairston's lack of expertise about their pedagogical ideologies and thus her mischaracterization of their works and theories. Significantly, Hairston responded to the letters, admitting that she had misquoted C.H. Knoblauch, but also acknowledging that she would not change the main points of her article (Letter 255).

This debate highlights how the rituals of speaking work. Hairston explained why she wrote an article conveying her opposition to the incorporation of gender, race, and cultural studies into the writing classroom. The journal that published her article also published responses to the article which allow readers to see how people accept Hairston's truths. Readers can see how scholars demand accountability from writers, especially if scholars feel that others may have misinterpreted them. Most importantly, readers can see the issues inherent in speaking about people, for Hairston had to issue an apology to Knoblauch for the mischaracterization of him in her piece.

### *The Subject as Other*

When someone is speaking about others, the individual or group being spoken of either becomes the subject of the message or an important component of the overall topic. Even Aristotle notes the importance of speaking about others within his "three divisions of oratory," which are ceremonial, political, and forensic rhetoric. In ceremonial speeches, speakers render praise or disapproval of the person about whom they speak; in forensic speeches, speakers endorse or sanction the individual about whom they speak; and in political speeches, speakers

debate how policies and laws affect the individual or group about whom they speak (Book 1, Ch. 3). When Aristotle discusses these divisions, he highlights what speakers must know and emphasize about the subject (the individuals or groups) within the speeches.

Of course, one thing Aristotle doesn't discuss, but scholars do today, is how a subject—that is, a person or group—can be othered by the speaker of a text. When we discuss Othering, we discuss something Aristotle does not: ethnicity and class. Within the academic setting, the Other, as described by Sundar Sarukkai, is a European concept designed to establish a binary between European scholars and the people (of color) they study. In his article, “The ‘Other’ in Anthropology and Philosophy,” Sarukkai notes that anthropologists have traditionally characterized “the other” as “non-western,” “inferior,” and “different” (1406-07). He points out that anthropologists have defined the “Other” based on their own Western understanding of culture. Hence, anthropologists speak about people and on behalf of people by describing and interpreting the lives of the “native” (1407). Though some anthropologists engage in “participant observation,” that is, they live with the people they are studying, while simultaneously adopting the rituals and speech of the “natives,” anthropologists still run the risk of “constructing [themselves] as ‘not-other,’” thereby increasing the risk of objectifying the people they study (1407).<sup>7</sup>

It is this objectivity and the feeling of academic Otherness that Royster critiques in her essay. In Scene One, Royster constructs herself as the audience who is referred to as the Other. As the Other, she feels “compelled” to understand her African American culture from the perspective of European and European American scholars. She repeats the word “compelled” three times in the first paragraph of this opening scene to indicate that though no one is coercing her to listen to these perspectives, she feels as if these perspectives are being imposed on her.

The speakers, she insinuates, do not consider that she as an African American could be a part of the listening audience (30-31).<sup>8</sup> As a representative figure, she must sit silently while authority figures talk about her African American culture without truly understanding or being accountable to the culture. More importantly, as the Other, she is not considered to be a part of the audience that the authority figure imagines. As an example, she points to the Herrnstein and Murray book *The Bell Curve*, which paints African Americans as intellectually inferior; the writers, thus, perhaps unaware, simply assume that African Americans are not part of the audience who will read the book (Royster 31).

When someone is othered, that person hears how others interpret his or her culture. Because the person othering speaks or writes about a group of people, that person, according to Alcoff, speaks on the Others' behalf. Thus, the person is describing Others in such a way that he or she is "speaking in place of them, that is speaking for them" (9). The problem is that some scholars do not have what Royster calls "home training," which she defines as an outside visitor's understanding that he or she has no right to go into someone's home "tramping around like you own the place, no matter how smart you are, or how much imagination you can muster, or how much authority and entitlement outside that home you may be privileged to hold" (32). In other words, Royster criticizes scholars for believing that they "own" cultures of which they are not a part, and for misinterpreting, prejudging, demeaning, and even libeling an entire group of people often unaware that they are doing so. In that respect, she is highlighting Sarukkai's criticism of anthropology and the way in which the discipline others people through some of the research techniques that anthropologists employ. Now, Royster is not advocating that people have no right to study cultures outside of their own; rather, she encourages scholars to recognize that they are strangers within another's culture; thus, they should be respectful of the culture that

they are studying. Most importantly, scholars should engage with the people of the culture: scholars should speak with the people and listen to them. To merely speak about/on behalf of them basically “others” the culture discussed (Royster 32-34).

Having home training also means that researchers, in their attempt to speak about others, will have what Marilyn Frye calls a “loving perception” or “loving eye.” Mariana Ortega describes Frye’s theory as one that encourages researchers to “look and listen” as well as “check and question” (60). Researchers who have a loving perception are cognizant of how their own “desires and needs” shape the way they interpret and “distort knowledge of this world” (60). Sometimes, however, researchers will have both a loving and arrogant eye regarding their research. As an example, Ortega points to how a white feminist researcher may believe that by incorporating the texts written by women of color, she is allowing these women to have voice. However, if she misquotes, misinterprets, or does not analyze the texts, the researcher instead “constructs a reality that is in fact closer to what she wants it to be rather than what it is” (Ortega 62). Her refusal to “check and question” her research can cause her to miss the nuances of her research subjects’ cultures, languages, and beliefs. The researcher, thus, modifies, if not misconstrues, the voices and experiences of women of color (Ortega 62). By not interrogating how she constructs and shapes her research and research subjects, the researcher becomes an “arrogant perceiver,” one who has “eyes that skillfully organize the world and everything in it with reference to the arrogant perceiver’s desires and interests” (Ortega 59). In other words, the researcher does not attempt to see or understand how her research subjects may construct their own reality.

To have “home training” and a “loving eye” means that researchers need to be aware of how they construct people and cultures in their writing. Researchers need to pay close attention

to the ways in which they use their knowledge to compose text. In some respects they need to reflect on their text and how they move from, say, including quotes to interpreting quotes. Most importantly, researchers need to understand their own subjectivity and how that reflects the way they construct the realities of others.

### *The Responsive Audience and Its Text*

Like Aristotle who considers the audience important for determining the “speech’s end and object” (Book 1, Ch. 3), Alcoff considers the audience important to determining “whether a claim is taken as a true, well-reasoned, compelling argument or significant idea” (13). The audience, thus, is not a passive entity, but one that actively engages with and judges the speaker’s text. Sometimes audiences, such as those who replied to Maxine Hairston, will respond to a speaker by producing new text—consequently creating a conversation with the speaker and with the speaker’s original audience and sometimes including new audiences in the process.

Though many scholars refer to Rigoberta Menchú’s work as a testimonio, it also acts very much as an autoethnography. Mary Louise Pratt defines autoethnography as “a text in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them” (Pratt 501). In other words, a writer will construct an autoethnography as a response to previous researchers’ construction of the writer’s culture. In Menchú’s work, she speaks about her family, her Quiché traditions, and the community in which she lives. While doing so, she addresses the differences in the ways in which the ladinos (mixed raced Guatemalans and full-blooded Indians who refuse to associate themselves with Indians) and Indians view various issues. For example, she points out that unlike ladinos, her community does not automatically reject homosexuals because “everything is a part of nature” (Menchú 60).

Additionally, unlike ladinos, who reject their religious Indian heritage, the Quiché preserve their religious heritage, while also using elements of Catholicism (84-86). By explaining the differences between her culture and the ladino culture, she explains why the Quiché believe what they believe.

When Menchú describes her culture, she speaks about it and thus speaks on its behalf. Readers who do not know Guatemalan history have to take her word that what she speaks is the truth. Likewise, they have to also take her word that she is adequately describing ladinos and the Guatemalan government. Though she admits several times that she hated ladinos, thus showing her bias, she also admits that her attitude about ladinos changed through her relationships with activists (some of whom were ladinos) seeking to improve Guatemalan society. Her work serves as a means of explaining her culture and justifying the preservation of it.

Just as Menchú uses her work to speak about and on behalf of Indians, Royster uses her essay to speak about and on behalf of black scholars and her research subjects. In Scene Two, Royster discusses the reactions scholars have to her research on rhetoric used by nineteenth century African American women writers. She says that people tend to elicit skepticism or discomfort with her work. Royster implies that many in her audience assumed that nineteenth century African American women could not be educated, cultured, or proficient in the arts, politics, business, sciences, and the like. What they instead think is that Royster has researched the “exception” and not the rule of how African American women lived their lives. Royster, therefore, uses her essay, as means of speaking to the critics. Royster responds to her critics by making clear that she believes that narratives and testimonies (which serve as part of “African-based cultures of theorizing”) can function as important paradigms for the “transformative process” of establishing credibility for the speaker and the speaker’s location. However, she also

recognizes that the audience can ignore or disbelieve the narratives; thus we see how the rituals of speaking are carried out in the Royster essay: She, as a speaker, may not have credibility with the audience. When she presents her research, some audience members question not only the validity of the research but also the validity of the narratives she presents to buttress her assertions (34-36). Thus, Royster cannot even present the first person narrative account of nineteenth century writers, much less even speak on behalf of them, without it being seen as invalid.

One major component of speaking on behalf of others is voice.<sup>9</sup> The speaker/writer can use his or her own voice to speak on another's behalf; but the speaker, like Royster, can adopt the voice(s) of the people for whom they speak as a means of providing "voice" to the group. The definition of voice, especially as articulated by those in Rhetoric and Composition, is nebulous. Personally, I believe that "voice," even when considered as a singular quality, would better be understood as a plurality, an amalgamation of various voices used for communication with various types of peoples in various types of situations. Voice, then, is individual in that my voice is representative of the influences that have affected me. But voice is also cultural because those influences are internalized in the voices that I use. Thus, my voice reflects the field of Rhetoric and Composition in that I have adopted the field's lexicon and incorporated it into my vocabulary, but it also reflects the writers I admire and who use stream of consciousness in their writings.

If voice is seen as individual and cultural, then this means that the speakers or writers who speak on behalf of others may, at times, find a need to negotiate between the use of their voice and the voice(s) of an individual, organization or community. The writer must, therefore, using his or her awareness, question what constitutes the "authentic" or "real" voice(s) of the



people about whom the writer speaks. Additionally, the writer must consider how the audience will react to voice(s) used in the text. We see this in the final scene of the Royster essay when Royster investigates the concept of the “authentic voice,” as she speaks about and speaks on behalf of African American writers. Royster acknowledges that scholars sometimes hear and appreciate her, but sometimes they do not truly understand the complexity of her voice(s). As an example, she discusses presenting a conference paper in which she recites an excerpt from a novel. By Royster reproducing the text in the characters’ voices, she speaks on behalf of the author by trying to speak like the author or the character the author created. As she states:

When the characters spoke in the scene, I rendered their voices, speaking and explaining, speaking and explaining, trying to translate the experience, to share the sounds of my historical place and to connect those sounds with the systems of belief so that deeper understanding of the scene might emerge, and so that those outside of the immediacy of my home culture, the one represented in the novel, might see and understand more and be able to make more useful connections to their own worlds and experiences. (36)

An audience member then praised Royster for limiting her use of academic jargon, and instead commended her for using her “natural” and “authentic” voice (36-37).<sup>10</sup> The problem is that the audience member does not hear the connections between the voice(s) of the characters (as represented by the speaking) and the voice(s) of the academic (as represented by the explaining). Additionally, the audience member does not care to engage in the cross-boundary discourse which requires the connection of his or her own world with that of the fictional world discussed by Royster. For the audience member, authenticity or truth comes only when Royster speaks “natural” (37). In this particular case, Royster speaks, but is not really heard.

Like Royster who uses multiple voices to discuss her research, Menchú and her translator use multiple voices as well. Throughout the text, readers see the following terms repeated: *finca* for plantation, *mimbre* for willow “used to for making cane baskets, furniture” (250), *compañero* for friend and later as a name use for the guerilla fighters (248), and *caxlan* which is the “Quiché name for ladino” (248). This allows for Menchú to maintain the Spanish and Indian voice(s) of her identity despite losing much of that in translation to English. But this also allows for readers to believe that what they are reading is “authentic” and thus increases the probability that readers will accept what Menchú says is the truth.

Though there were some who accepted Menchú’s testimonio as truth, the reality, according to Alcoff, is that women and African Americans have difficulty being heard and believed due to their lower status in Western society (13). In some respects, Royster’s essay shows that. Royster believes it is important for her as a woman and as an African American woman to create her own narratives and testimonies that will allow her to “go to a place within [herself,]” where she can ultimately hear the sound of her own voice and not necessarily the voices of people who try to speak on her behalf (35-36). By hearing her own voice, Royster can also speak her own voice and hopefully have someone who is willing to listen to her.

Or perhaps Royster is not heard because, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak asserts, the Subject is always Western (“Subaltern” 271); since Royster does not look Western and since her rendering of the subject’s voice does not conform to the Western voice, it may have been easier for the audience member to see Royster as the Other. When Spivak begins her essay by writing, “Some of the most radical criticism coming out of the West today is the result of an interested desire to conserve the subject of the West or the West as Subject” (“Subaltern” 271), she shows how Western intellectuals perpetuate a binary between themselves and the (generally) oppressed

cultures they study. Because they are typically the ones studying cultures, Western intellectuals have the power to represent (as in speak for) and re-present (as in create or portray) Others. According to Sabina Sawhney, those in the dominant group often encourage those in the subordinate group to perform “otherness.” This performance allows those in the dominant group to see identity as fixed, as something that conforms to the dominant society’s assumption of ethnic identity (210-16). This sentiment is echoed by Ilan Kapoor who declares that “even *if* subalterns speak, they (like anyone) may perform the roles they think are expected of them” (636). Most importantly, this performance of identity alters the way a speaker can speak and the way a speaker can speak on behalf of someone.

The idea of performance plays a major role in Menchú’s work. In her text, Menchú indicates that she had little schooling and only a basic understanding of Spanish. Because she is presumably not fluent in reading and writing, her editor Elisabeth Burgos-Debray shapes the text. Burgos-Debray is the one who records Menchú and writes about Menchú’s culture. She “allows” for Menchú to go into great detail describing the Quiché culture—everything from the way in which marriage ceremonies are conducted to the way in which children are taught to maintain the secrets of their culture. As an editor, she can remove parts of Menchú’s story as well as restructure text. She can decide to allow or disallow for dialect features. It is, therefore, no surprise that some scholars see ethnographies as a type of “oral performance” that lets ethnographers create culture based on the informant’s words. In fact, Alice A. Brittin quotes scholar Stephen Tyler’s assertion that ethnographies (such as Menchú’s) serve as a means of engaging in “oral performance” so that the editor can “steal the only thing she [the informant] has left—her voice” (qtd. in Brittin 102).

Thus, some scholars say that it is Burgos-Debray who gave “voice” to Menchú by helping to write Menchú’s testimonio (Brittin 102). But, as Brittin points out, Menchú and her compañeros had the ultimate say in how the book came to be. Menchú had her friends read the book to her, and she ordered the removal of certain sections of the book. By doing this, Menchú took control of the content and the way in which she was re-presented. According to Brittin, Menchú did not altogether allow Burgos-Debray to represent or re-present her (102-04).

Like Menchú, Royster can speak, though Royster does not need someone to mediate for her. In fact, Royster re-presents the African American community by highlighting what she calls “long-standing practices in African-based cultures of theorizing in narrative form” (35). Most importantly, she does what Frank Farmer encourages Composition scholars to do: “insinuate ourselves in discourses that were never meant to include us in the first place” (626). In other words, Royster decides to literally voice her opinion in debates in which writers or speakers never envisioned her as part of the audience.

Royster’s rationale for speaking on behalf of the African American community is clearly political—she wants to defend African Americans against *The Bell Curve*. But she also wants to articulate the experiences that African Americans have had in the academy and in the larger American society. She mentions the fact that Anna Julia Cooper, the first African American woman to earn a Ph.D., knew her voice was “muted” in nineteenth century America. Likewise, Royster points to poet Audre Lorde’s assertion that what she speaks can be “bruised and misunderstood” (qtd. in Royster 36). In effect, Royster shows that there is a pattern of African American intellectual women whose voices have been stifled in American society.

Menchú’s decision to speak on behalf of community is also political. She wants to bring attention to the repressive regime in Guatemala. Though she speaks about her life, she also notes

that her experiences are similar to the experiences of other Guatemalans as well: “The important thing is that what has happened to me has happened to many other people too: My story is the story of all poor Guatemalans. My personal experience is the reality of a whole people” (1). This attempt to use one’s experiences to speak about experiences of a whole group is known as essentialism.

Trina Grillo defines essentialism as

the notion that there is a single woman’s, or Black person’s, or any other group’s, experience that can be described independently from other aspects of the person—that is there is an “essence” to the experience. An essentialist outlook assumes that the experience of being a member of the group is a stable one, one with a clear meaning, a meaning constant through time, space, and different historical, social, political and personal contexts. (19)

Thus, when Royster discusses how African Americans feel in regards to *The Bell Curve* and links her experiences to silencing with Cooper’s and Lorde’s experiences with silencing, she engages in a form of essentialism. When Menchú declares that her experience is “the reality” for other Guatemalans, she engages in a form of essentialism. Essentialism, Grillo lets readers know, happens all the time (29). In fact, Spivak, in a 1994 interview with Elizabeth Gross, admitted to sometimes engaging “strategic” essentialism (166). Thomas Crisp notes that strategic essentialism “is the temporary deployment of positivist essentialism by a marginalized population for political purposes in order to displace a hegemonic majority” (95). Strategic essentialism allows for oppressed groups (or individuals representing a group) to describe themselves and their experiences while also critiquing the dominant group’s ideologies and sociopolitical dominance (Bucholtz 401). In their discussions, Spivak, Crisp, and Buscholz point

out that individuals or groups use or should use strategic essentialism with an understanding that it is a temporary strategy to address an injustice or a call for political awareness of an issue.<sup>11</sup>

The use of strategic essentialism, like the use of the autoethnographies or testimonials, allows speakers to respond to how they have been portrayed within cultural texts. The speakers, thus, were at one time audience members (perhaps intentional or unintentional audiences), who become both a speaker and a responsive audience member to the text. Royster responds forcefully to scholars and Menchú responds forcefully to the Guatemalan government.

### *The Nonresponsive Audience and Its Silences*

Unfortunately, not every situation involving the rituals of speaking allows for others to respond. This is true in debates when audience members may not have the opportunity to refute comments by debaters or when readers are unable to publish a book-length counterargument to a publication they just read. Likewise, there are also instances in which those who are spoken about feel too powerless to respond.

As seen in the Royster article, members of the audience who are spoken of (or spoken on behalf of) can feel powerless to counteract claims made about them or made on behalf of them. In fact, it may even be possible that the speaker who speaks about or speaks on behalf of a group of people does not even imagine that group as part of the audience. This can also be seen in the section in which Menchú hears her employer and the employer's friends discuss the laziness of Indians, without caring that Menchú is in the room and knowing that there is a cultural prohibition against Menchú responding, thus silencing her (Menchú 99). Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford emphasize that historically rhetoricians have envisioned audiences as either being address or invoked. When an audience is addressed, the rhetors "share the assumption that

knowledge of [the] audience's attitudes, beliefs, and expectations is not only possible (via observation and analysis) but essential" (78). In other words, rhetors envision *who* is a part of the audience and therefore who is able to relate to what they say. When an audience is invoked, rhetors emphasize the "created fiction" (qtd. in Ede and Lunsford 82) of audience. Rhetors provide "cues which help to define the role or roles the writer wishes the reader to adopt in responding to the text" (83). In other words, the rhetor attempts to subtly (or explicitly) manipulate the audience into understanding how the audience is to react to the text. In the context of this discussion, though, what's important is that both theories allow for the writer to exclude people from being part of the audience. The audience addressed theory doesn't take into consideration the fact that someone may be reading or hearing text that is not directed (or supposed to be directed) to them. The audience invoked theory assumes that all audiences are universally malleable and will respond in the way that the rhetorician wishes; thus, the audience invoked theory makes it difficult for the writer to take into consideration generational, cultural, gender, religious, or philosophical influences that may prevent or allow for the audience to respond to its role.

Readers can see easily how audiences are overlooked within Royster's essay. While the second part of Scene One deals with the ways in which scholars research people, the first part deals with people who are researched, who may or may not be a part of the targeted audience the speaker intends to reach. Royster sets up a dichotomy between herself as an audience member and the person who is speaking. Royster is the Other who is silenced by the speaker. But does the same dynamic apply equally between speakers and writers? According to Walter Ong, "[The] writer must construct in his imagination, clearly or vaguely, an audience cast in some sort of role—entertainment seekers, reflective sharers of experience . . . , and so on" (12). The reading

audience, in the meantime, “has to play the role in which the author has cast [them], which seldom coincides with [their] role in the rest of the actual life” (12). While Ong deals with writers and readers, his ideas can also apply to speakers and listeners. As someone who is a part of the academy, Royster knows that her role as an audience member in a conference setting is limited to listening in a way that is “expressionless” and “well-mannered” (Royster 30). In a poignant passage, she writes, “In a metaphoric fashion, these ‘authorities’ let me know, once again, that Columbus has discovered America and claims it now, claims it still for a European crown” (31). Her accentuation of the word “authorities” indicates a hierarchy between herself as an audience member and the speaker to whom she is listening. When Royster asserts that the authorities cling to the mythological belief that Columbus discovered America, Royster metaphorically references not just the academy’s disregard of the indigenous peoples who populated the Americas before Columbus’s arrival, but also the subaltern position of indigenous and other peoples now. It is the metaphorical Columbus (or academics) who speaks, not the people he “discovered.” In the same way, Royster lets readers know the audience can be forced to accept the claims even though the audience may feel powerless to speak back.

Though Royster shows that her, Cooper’s, and Lorde’s voices have been stifled, this does not mean that they cannot speak on behalf of themselves or others. The fact is that though these women have lived in societies in which African Americans and women were oppressed, they were not, as Spivak would assert in 1988, “subaltern.” According to Kylie Smith, intellectuals have traditionally used Antonio Gramsci’s term “subaltern” to describe those without “autonomous political power” (39). Gramsci describes the subaltern as a group “subjected” to the whims of those who hold more power than them; thus, the subaltern must “defend themselves” within the political system in which they are forced to operate (Gramsci 207). In fact, members



of Menchú's community might be considered subaltern since they, according to Menchú, were forced by their ladino employers to vote for specific candidates in order to keep their jobs (Menchú 25-26).

Spivak, however, redefines a subaltern, at least a female subaltern, "as [a] female [who] cannot be heard or read" ("Subaltern" 308); most importantly "the subaltern cannot speak" ("Subaltern" 308). The subaltern, then, is silenced.<sup>12</sup> Silencing, according to Lynn Thiesmeyer, is "a way to use language as a means to limit, remove or undermine the legitimacy of another's use of language" (2). Not only does silencing reinforce social hierarchies, but it also discourages the silenced party to confront conflicts, especially as related to justice, bias and favoritism. So while the silenced party can speak, it may find the need to engage in self-censorship (hence limiting or removing its use of language) in order not to cause conflict within the dominant culture (Thiesmeyer 4-9).<sup>13</sup> Although Spivak's assertion regarding the inability of the subaltern to speak might seem absolute, Jenny Sharpe encourages readers to reinterpret Spivak's work as an "interrogation of the academic effort to give the gendered subaltern voice in history" (Sharpe and Spivak 609); in other words, the statement should not be taken literally but as a metaphor for how Western intellectuals claim that the subaltern can speak for themselves, when in fact Western intellectuals are speaking about them, and in ways that ultimately silence the subaltern (Spivak, "Subaltern" 283).

To expand these ideas further, J. Maggio reminds readers that critics such as Bruce Robbins have pointed out how Spivak "attempts to speak for the subaltern" (429). Interestingly, Spivak does not give a concrete definition of the subaltern; her description of the subaltern is influenced by the general definition of the Other: that is, one who is colonized, has been colonized, or is the descendent of the colonized (Maggio 421). Maggio defines the subaltern as

“epistemologically below the dominant culture” (427); to Maggio, the subaltern can speak: “We are simply unable to hear them” (437). In fact, Jenny Sharpe reminds readers that Spivak actually uses her article to critique how theorists and researchers portray the subaltern as a woman of color (Sharpe and Spivak 610).

To Spivak, an example of a subaltern woman is the sati, a Hindu woman who immolates herself after the death of her spouse. She gives the reader two voices: the first is that of the British who abolished the rite: “White men saving brown women from brown men” (“Subaltern” 297); the other voice is that of the Indian nativist: “The women actually wanted to die” (“Subaltern” 297); what readers don’t hear, says Spivak, “is the women’s voice-consciousness” (“Subaltern” 297). What readers do hear is how others speak about women and how they interpret women’s actions. This, in turn, leads to the infantilization of women. Maggio, for example, compares the subaltern to a child with two feuding parents (425). The parents get to speak and yell and debate, but the child does not. This metaphor points to the powerlessness of the subaltern and is reminiscent of the belief that the “child should be seen but not heard.” The example also points to the fact that speaking about someone does not necessarily allow for that person to speak for himself or herself.

Royster, Alcoff, and Spivak encourage readers to understand how people are not allowed to speak for themselves. All point to the fact that certain people—generally white males—are accorded a higher status in Western societies and thus seen as experts. Those who are considered privileged tend to be heard and believed by an audience. Royster and Alcoff encourage speakers to understand how speeches and writings affect the people who are being talked about. In many ways, they seek to reform the rituals of speaking to find a more equal ground among the speaker, the audience, and the people who are spoken about. Moreover, I believe that they encourage

people to be aware of how they speak on behalf of others, especially since both writers acknowledge that speaking about and for others is a rhetorical and ethical issue that people should address.

Spivak, however, questions whether or not the speaker, especially one who is subaltern, can even speak. After all, those who are not subaltern can speak but are often misunderstood. As an example, Spivak discusses the suicide of Bhauvaneswari Bhaduri, a teenage girl, who “hanged herself in her father’s modest apartment in North Calcutta in 1926” (“Subaltern” 307). At the time Bhaduri was active in the Indian independence movement and had felt pressure to participate in a political assassination. Rather than do this, Bhaduri chose to commit suicide. Her family, however, attributed Bhaduri’s decision to commit suicide as “a case of illicit love” (“Subaltern” 308). Because Bhaduri was involved in the independence movement and was a part of the middle-class, Spivak does not consider her a “true subaltern” (“Subaltern” 308). But when people like Bhaduri and Royster, women who have some access to power, can easily be misunderstood, then it is no wonder that someone with more authority would attempt to speak about them.

### **Speaking for Others**

Part of my definition of speaking on behalf of others entails understanding how a speaker represents an individual or group. When engaged in representation, as opposed to re-presentation, a speaker will speak *for*, not just about a group. Spivak, in fact, makes a distinction between “represent” and “re-present.” She uses the term “represent” (or *Vertretung*) to connote political advocacy, generally on behalf of a group. She notes that “representation” symbolizes “rhetoric-as-persuasion” (“Subaltern” 277). When a speaker engages in representation, the

speaker is assumed to “work in another’s interest” (“Subaltern” 276). Though Alcoff emphasizes that speaking for and speaking about are interrelated, Spivak advocates we understand the distinction of speaking for (as in represent) and speaking about (as in re-present). The distinction, according to Spivak, helps people understand who is accountable for the portrayal or the advocacy of an individual or group.

### *The Speaker as Subject and Advocate*

In the beginning of her essay Royster establishes herself as an African American who is a part of the African American community, which she refers to as “my community” (30). In some respects, she engages in Spivak’s notion of representation or advocacy for the African American community and for those who might be labeled Other. Royster speaks as part of the group and she speaks for the group when she criticizes *The Bell Curve* and its assertion that African Americans lack intellect. She writes, “As has been the case throughout our history in this country, we are put in jeopardy and on trial in a way that should not exist but does” (30-31). Notice that she uses the first person “we” to describe how the community feels about *The Bell Curve*. Referencing the inferiority discussion in *The Bell Curve*, she implicitly speaks for the African American community when she advocates that academics have “home training” before engaging in research about communities outside of their own.

As a self-described “Other” and scholar, Royster speaks to scholars while also speaking as a scholar and an Other. Referring to scholars as “strangers,” Royster writes, “As strangers, we must learn to treat the loved people and places of Others with care and to understand that, when we do not act respectfully and responsibly, we leave ourselves rightly open to wrath” (33). Here, Royster advocates for Others by encouraging scholars to engage in socially-responsible research.

Additionally, she also points out that, at times, Others do have a voice and the power to refuse scholars access to research them or their communities.

This ability to refuse access to those of a more dominant class indicates that not all Others are subaltern and not all Others feel the need to have people represent their interests. In fact, Royster encourages scholars to engage with Others by talking *with* them, not solely *about* or *for* them (Royster 38). The irony is that though she doesn't refer to college students and educators as Others, she implies that both groups have been othered because both groups have had people speak about them and for them. For example, she shows that teachers other students by "[insisting] that our students trust us and what we contend is in their best interest" (38). Notice that she emphasizes the way in which teachers know what is in the "best interest" of their students and that by "contending" this, they speak for them. Ironically, she also points to the fact that teachers themselves have been othered in that they have allowed people outside of teaching to represent and speak for them. She writes, "Seemingly, we [educators] have been forever content to let voices other than our own speak authoritatively about our areas of expertise and about us. It is time we speak for ourselves, in our interests, in the interest in our work, and in the interest of our students" (39). In other words, Royster is advocating that teachers speak for/advocate for themselves and speak for/advocate for their students.

The reality is that there are many academics who speak for and advocate for others, especially those who are considered subaltern. Gary Kline, for example, believes that educators who can speak and be heard, should speak up and advocate for those who are politically repressed and economically exploited by those in power (11). Alcoff would seem to agree, noting that in itself, speaking for others is not necessarily a bad thing. For example, Alcoff's discussion of Rigoberta Menchú's autobiography in which Menchú states "that her story is 'not

only *my* life, it's also the testimony of . . . all poor Guatemalans" (qtd. in Alcoff 18) shows the political necessity for speaking for others. Though Menchú is a Quiche Indian, she certainly cannot represent all of the Indian (Mayan) groups in Guatemala. But what Menchú does is provide readers with first-hand accounts of the genocides and the political instability in Guatemala and in so doing, put pressure on the people responsible for genocide to stop what they are doing. Though Menchú is not a scholar in the traditional sense of the word, she, unlike some other Quiche, is knowledgeable of the Spanish language (Alcoff 18-19). Spivak might say that Menchú is a "native informant for first-world intellectuals interested in the voice of the Other" (Spivak, "Subaltern" 284). That is, Menchú interprets the subaltern for intellectuals interested in Guatemala<sup>14</sup>. However, unlike the East Indian elites Spivak describes who adopted the elitism and colonial mentality of the British, Menchú is described by Alcoff as someone who attempts to subvert rather than adhere to colonialism or other oppressive forces. Menchú consciously learns Spanish to prevent the intended misinterpretation of her language by the government. Her family is friendly towards Europeans who seek to provide agricultural assistance, not because they believe Europeans know more about agriculture, but rather, to "[maintain] friendly relations" (Alcoff 19); Alcoff tells readers that Menchú understands the rhetorical implications of speaking for others:

Thus, Menchú cannot be constructed as a "naïve" speaker unaware of the dangers and difficulties of speaking for others; she and her *compañeros* are well aware of the dangers since they have so often been the unhappy recipients of malicious or well-intentioned but wrongheaded attempts by others to speak for them. Yet instead of retreating from speaking for others, Menchú and her *compañeros* devised methods to decrease the dangers. (Alcoff 19)

Menchú speaks, but she speaks using the language of the dominant culture, something J. Maggio says those who are considered subaltern have to do (431). This, of course, is important when considering, as I do later, the debate regarding SRTOL and the belief that Others (in this case, those who do not speak standard English) must speak standard English if they wish to be accepted, much less heard within mainstream American society.

The problematic issue of speaking for others can sometimes center on a narcissistic need for a speaker to be seen as a savior. Alcoff writes that “the practice of speaking for others is often born of a desire for mastery, to privilege oneself as the one who more correctly understands the truth about another’s situation or as the one who can champion a just cause and thus achieve glory and praise” (29). Though this point is important to understanding why people may choose to speak on behalf of others, readers need to further understand how people who speak on behalf of others gain the mastery, the privilege and the right to engage in this practice. In other words, readers need to see the rhetorical situations that lead people to speak on behalf of others. By seeing the rhetorical situation, readers could, for example, understand better the dangers Menchú faced in speaking for others and see rhetorically the methods she used that would lead Guatemalan Indians to accept or not accept Menchú’s autobiography.

### *The Intersections of Speakers, Audiences, and Text*

The way in which the writer shapes the text has a profound effect on how the readers/listeners accept how the writer speaks on behalf of others. Thus, it is important not only to study why and when people speak on behalf of others, but how audiences respond to such occasions. Alcoff, for example, provides readers with a compelling reason as to why Menchú needs to speak on behalf of Guatemalan Indians. What Alcoff does not do is provide readers with

an understanding of how audiences reacted to Menchú's efforts. Arturo Arias tells readers that Menchú "was perceived as a representative of the Mayan peoples by non-Mayan members of the [political] opposition as well" (79). Because of this, Menchú must adopt "elements of Western discourse" (79) and in some ways, "perform" Mayan identity by recounting Mayan traditions (79-80). When reading Menchú's autobiography, readers need to keep in mind that though Menchú knew Spanish, her Spanish was considered to be "basic." Accordingly, her editor/mediator, Elisabeth Burgos-Debray, admits to correcting grammar, chronically rearranging events to follow a Western (as opposed to a Mayan) chronological sequence, and making editorial changes that would "make it a story, so that it could reach the general public" (qtd. in Arias 81).

Of course, it is not unusual for writers and editors to remove cultural linguistic features within a text to make it palatable to the targeted audience. In their landmark essay on feminist theory and cultural imperialism, María C. Lugones and Elizabeth V. Spelman point to how *Hispanas* (their term) who wish to contribute to and participate in the feminist movement must adopt the language of mainstream/white feminists. Addressing the white feminist reader, they write, "When we talk to you we use your language: the language of your experience and of your theories" (575). They make clear that the English language and white feminist theories cannot capture the realities of *Hispanas*, much less speak for them if this is what they wanted to do. Most importantly, the language and theories feminist *Hispanas* must adopt do not appeal to many of the *Hispanas* they envision as their audience.

We should thus rephrase Spivak's question, "Can the subaltern speak?" to "What role does the audience play in constraining what the subaltern (or any other person) says?" It is clear that the audience is a contributing factor to the shaping of Menchú's text; the editor felt that



Menchú's "voice" had to be altered in a way that made it acceptable and palatable to Western tastes. Menchú, thus, becomes the native informant, someone who, according to Ilan Kapoor, is "positioned to speak on behalf of his/her ethnic group or country, typically *for* the benefit of the Western investigator or audience" (630). And yet, as Arias asserts, Menchú's voice is not acceptable to critic David Stoll who uses his 1998 book on Rigoberta Menchú to criticize her for not conforming to Western conventions regarding historical facts. Stoll essentially accuses Menchú of lying. According to Arias, Stoll believes that Menchú does not speak for the Mayans; instead Menchú speaks for the "revolutionary left" (75-76). The fact that her work is considered a *testimonio* makes it equally troubling, for in Stoll's mind a *testimonio* should be about the gathering of facts and data. A *testimonio*, according to Arias, is "a collective and communal account of a person's life" (76). And since it is a communal account, the person engaged in creating a *testimonio* is also engaged in re-presenting the "collective and communal account" of the community or communities in which he or she lives and interacts with.

Most importantly, says Kimberly A. Nance, the *testimonio* "is a project of social justice in which the text is an instrument. . . . Although the genre is frequently characterized as didactic, that description fails to recognize that the goal of *testimonio* is not only to educate readers about injustice, but to persuade those readers to act" (*Literature* 19). Thus, a writer such as Menchú, uses the *testimonio* as a means of advocacy. Though I disagree with George Yùdice's assertion that writers who use testimonials "[do] not speak for or represent a community," I do agree with his point that testimonials "[perform] an act of identity-formation which is simultaneously personal and collective" (15). While Menchú does not discuss in detail the political and historical background regarding the Guatemalan Civil War, she does discuss how government officials and ladino landowners mistreat Indians. She provides details of government takeover of

Indian lands and military torture of Indian resisters. She recounts the horrid conditions of the plantations where Indian women, men, and children work and sometimes die due to malnutrition and mass spraying of pesticides. As she does this, she provides her personal experiences and links her experiences to others to discuss the brutality of what she and her compatriots endured. Likewise, she shows how anti-Indian sentiment is engrained within Guatemalan culture. In the section in which she discusses her life as a maid, she quotes her employer and her employer's friends as saying, "Indians are lazy, they don't work, that's why they are poor. They're always making trouble because they won't work" (Menchú 99). In another section, she discusses how a poor ladino child had said to a nun, "Yes, we're poor but we're not Indians" (119). This anti-Indian sentiment, Menchú implies, dehumanizes Indians and justifies the government's horrendous treatment of them.

Indeed, Menchú's text details Indian life and the way in which it was upended first by Spanish colonialism and later by the Guatemalan government's policy of killing Indians (and others) who sought political, economic, and social reform. Likewise, it provides justification for why Menchú and others engage in military and nonviolent resistance against the government. Most importantly, however, it allows Menchú to speak for herself and her fellow *compañeros* who seek justice. She writes, "Our experience in Guatemala has always been to be told: 'Ah, poor Indians, they can't speak.' And many people have said, '*I'll* speak for them.' This hurts us very much. This is a kind of discrimination" (Menchú 228). This kind of discrimination, the kind that culturally allows those of a higher socioeconomic group to voice the needs and goals of an oppressed group, represents a form of Othering that Royster alludes to in her essay.

Like the rituals of speaking, Othering allows for someone of a higher status to speak about and *for* others. Speaking for others can disempower the group being spoken for because

members of that group cannot explain how their experiences are intertwined with the needs they advocate for. For example, Menchú discusses how General Kjell campaigned within Indian communities promising to provide educational and health services designed *for* them. Most importantly, he promised land reforms in which Indians would be able to maintain their lands. Interestingly, as he was discussing what Indians needed, he kept referencing the importance of providing bread. The problem as Menchú sees it—Indians don't consume bread; they consume tortillas. Prior to this scene, Menchú emphasizes the importance of tortilla within her culture and the culture's association of bread to Spanish colonialism. Thus, we see the issue of someone (who would later renege on his promises) speaking to and advocating *for* the needs of Indians but not understanding the significance of certain foods within Indian cultures (Menchú 157).

Though Menchú's testimonio does not provide information on how readers can get involved in the movement to end to the violence against the oppressed in Guatemala, it, like other testimonios, "[offers] readers a means of changing their minds about the world, a development which may, in turn, lead to activism" (Nance, "Let Us" 68). The possibility that speaking *for* someone can lead others into advocating *for* someone's behalf is an important component within a rhetorical situation.

As I will elaborate more fully in later chapters, a rhetorical situation, as defined by Lloyd Bitzer, calls for a speaker to highlight an exigence or a problem that needs to be fixed. The speaker must encourage the rhetorical audience to urgently address and ameliorate the problem. This sense of urgency relates to George Yùdice definition of testimonial writing, which he defines as "an authentic narrative, told by a witness who is moved to narrate by the urgency of a situation (e.g. war, oppression, revolution, etc.)" (17). In Menchú's case, she provides readers with a detailed account of her life and her culture; she points out the various exigencies,

including the torture and killing of Indians; the horrendous working conditions for Indians who work in the plantations (or *fincas*); the governmental attempts to take land away from Indians; and the negative views of Indians by the *ladinos*. Though she does not make suggestions for how the audience of readers can help her cause, she shows the multiple ways in which she and various organizations attempt to address the exigencies. It is as if she is saying that the people who are most affected by the exigencies (that is, those who are Indians, poor *ladinos*, etc.) should be the ones to ameliorate their rhetorical situation.

According to Proma Tagore, testimonials such as those used by Menchù and Royster not only allow writers to focus on their personal experiences but also allow writers to discuss their marginalization within the dominant culture, thus confronting the ways in which they may have been silenced within the dominant culture (Tagore 3). Royster, in fact, uses the testimony and personal experience (alongside objective data) as legitimate forms of research. However, in Scene Two, she emphasizes that the audiences she has encountered have questioned her methods, and thus her right to speak and speak on behalf of others. Like Menchú, who does not theorize according to Western academic standards, Royster acknowledges that she is not theorizing in the traditional Western sense of the word:

In discussing nineteenth century African American women's work, I bring tales of difference and adventure. I bring cultural proofs and instructive examples, all of which invariably must serve as rites of passage to credibility. I also bring the power of storytelling. These tales of adventure in odd places are the transitions by which to historicize and theorize anew with these writers re-inscribed in a rightful place. Such a process respects long-standing practices in African-based cultures of theorizing in narrative form. (35)

In other words, Royster attempts to assert her right to speak and not conform to the audience's expectations of how she is supposed to speak. She prefers to use "African-based" forms of theorizing (through the use of stories) that allow her to shape her text. However, Royster knows she risks alienating her audience who, like Stoll, may see the narrative or the testimony (the *testimonio*) as illegitimate historical data. Royster's goal, however, is to "subvert the paradigm" (35) of what is considered to be acceptable research and theory (Royster 35-36).<sup>15</sup> In this sense she advocates, or speaks for, the use of alternate theories for understanding culture.

Interestingly, Royster and Alcoff call for an equalization of the speaker, the audience, and the people who are being spoken about. Alcoff encourages people to speak and listen to others. Alcoff writes, "We should strive to create wherever possible the conditions for dialogue and the practice of speaking with and to rather than speaking for others" (23). The issue then becomes how people can create these idyllic conditions and how people know when these conditions exist. The problem in the academy, as illustrated by Royster's essay, is that it is difficult to create situations where people can simultaneously speak and listen to each other on an equal footing. In Scene Three, for example, Royster points out that students sometimes feel so alienated within the academy that they cannot speak at all. Though Royster does not say this, it becomes clear that if students cannot speak, teachers can end up speaking for them. This becomes problematic in that teachers may end up doing what Royster says scholars do when discussing the African American community: teachers may act like they "know" students and student cultures, without taking into consideration what students may have to say about how they are rendered (38-39).

Though Alcoff and Royster emphasize the importance of speaking with and listening to others, Spivak, as I have already noted, questions whether or not a speaker, especially one who is considered subaltern, can even speak. Thus, it would seem that Spivak does not believe that the

rituals of speaking can even allow for a more equal footing among the speaker, audience, and the group being spoken of, hence her 1988 conclusion that the subaltern cannot speak. But in her updated essay, printed in the 1999 book *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*, she acknowledges that in some ways the subaltern may be able to speak, one means of which is voting. However, she is still ambiguous about the subaltern voice and its ability to speak. She writes, “When a line of communication is established between a member of subaltern groups and the circuits of citizenship or institutionality, the subaltern has been inserted into the long road to hegemony” (*Critique* 310). The “long road to hegemony” represents the unequal footing that exists within the rituals of speaking and the fact that the subaltern is on a road implies that the subaltern does not have power; thus, it becomes easy for those who are part of the hegemonic institutions to still speak for the subaltern.

And one of those hegemonic institutions is the university or as Spivak refers to it, the “knowledge-production factory” (*Critique* 309). In Royster’s, Alcoff’s and Spivak’s works, the writers show how speaking for, about, and on behalf of others seems to be commonplace within academic settings. After all, most academics study or write about cultures—whether these are educational, political, racial, socioeconomic, scientific, or artistic, cultures—and find themselves writing or speaking extensively about (and hence on behalf of or for) groups of people. Likewise, most academics use outside theoretical research in which they discuss a particular person so that they end up summarizing and speaking on behalf of that person or that person’s research. In fact, this chapter serves as a means of speaking on behalf of Royster, Alcoff, Spivak, and others, though my ultimate intention is to use their works to illuminate the concept of speaking on behalf of others. In other words, speaking on behalf of others is part of the process in academia.

## A Conclusion and a Beginning

Because speaking on behalf of others is inherent within academia, it is important that scholars engage in and be aware of how they speak about others when writing their works or engaging in speaking. In many respects, Alcoff, Royster, and Spivak encourage scholars to be more cognizant of how they represent and re-present others, so that they do not mischaracterize individuals (as Hairston did) or objectify groups of people as Sarukkai asserts anthropologists have done.

Of course, there are some writers such as Joyce Trebilcot who try to speak for themselves without creating the illusion that everyone within their various communities holds the same beliefs. Trebilcot consciously eliminates words and phrases such as “we” and “our” that indicate she speaks for others. In her discussion of the word “we” in the phrase “we all need love,” Trebilcot emphasizes that there might be women who believe that this phrase does not correspond to their reality. Thus, she changes the phrase to “I need love” and makes sure that her research findings and interpretations only apply to her experiences (4). To Trebilcot, speaking for herself allows her “to rewrite the entire world for herself” (6). This, of course, does not mean that she does not acknowledge other people’s realities. But this does mean that Trebilcot recognizes that her world is not the same as my world.

At the outset, I questioned whether it was even possible *not* to speak for others. There are those, after all, who say speaking for others is a human phenomenon—one that is done because human beings speak and they feel the need to speak for themselves, their families, and their communities. And while this may indeed be true, not all cultures accept this idea. For example, Bambi B. Schieffelin says that people in Melanesian societies are discouraged from “verbally speculating about the intentions, motives, and internal states of others” (431). In Bosavi (Papua

New Guinea), children know that adults frown upon gossip (which certainly can include speaking on behalf of others) and realize that adults believe it is uncouth to “speak others’ thoughts, ones that they have not themselves articulated” (435). Schieffelin hints that though the rhetorical traditions among the Bosavi remain intact, new contact with linguistically diverse people who lack the grammatical and rhetorical structures of the Bosavi could change the way in which the Bosavi think about speaking and speaking on behalf of others (439).

In this chapter, I have introduced readers to the problem of speaking for others. I have drawn on the theoretical insights of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Linda Alcoff regarding this problem, and I have tried to show how their ideas can be applied to two concrete examples taken from the works of Jacqueline Jones Royster and Rigoberta Menchú. One of the purposes in using this approach is to illustrate just how complex and nuanced the problem of speaking on behalf of others can be. In addition, I desired to call attention to cultural and ethical questions that must be considered when writers—student, scholarly, professional, and others—engage in their own metacognitive processes of composing. And finally, I wanted to suggest that the problem of speaking on behalf of others can be usefully applied to the rhetorical situation of how the “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” came to be. This is why I want to bring Lloyd F. Bitzer into the discussion at this point.

Bitzer’s theory regarding the rhetorical situation can help people understand how an exigence can serve as the primary motivator for compelling people to speak on behalf of others. Bitzer defines exigence as “an imperfection marked by urgency” (“Rhetorical” 6). It is a pressing issue that must be addressed, acted upon, and modified. Royster, for example, sees the silencing and misrepresentation of African American scholars as exigencies. As she addresses these exigencies, she speaks on behalf of African American scholars and the African American



community. To be sure, there are different rhetorical motivations writers or speakers have when deciding to speak on behalf of people when incorporating others' research. Nonetheless, Bitzer's theory can be helpful in understanding how speakers use an exigence to speak for (that is, advocate) a group of people and encourage a rhetorical audience to act, within certain rhetorical constraints.

One major drawback to Bitzer's theory, however, is his lack of discussion on identity and the way in which the identities of the speaker and/or rhetorical audience affect how the rhetorical audience responds to the exigencies. By incorporating Alcoff and Spivak's theories, especially in regards to identity, I hope to enhance Bitzer's theory of the rhetorical situation. Likewise, I wish to use his theory on the rhetorical situation to enhance our understanding of what makes people speak and advocate for others.

In particular, I want to pursue this enhanced understanding by applying Bitzer's theory of the rhetorical situation to the "Students' Right to Their Own Language" (SRTOL) document. Approved by the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) in 1974, SRTOL was designed to discourage teachers from engaging in dialect eradication among students speaking dialects other than standard English. Though I will use elements of Alcoff's and Spivak's theories to show how speaking on behalf of others is done within the document, I will also incorporate Bitzer's rhetorical situation so that readers can see that the CCCC used a rhetorical strategy for a specific purpose: to encourage people to do *something* that would protect students. This rhetorical strategy relies on speaking on behalf of different groups so that certain groups (namely educators) will be moved by discourse to (in the words of Spike Lee) "do the right thing."

Before I show how Bitzer's theory can be applied to SRTOL and the way the CCCC speaks on behalf of and for others, I will use my next chapter to discuss SRTOL more in depth. Readers will see how people reacted to the document and how the interpretation of the document has changed throughout the years. Moreover, readers will also see how supporters and opponents of SRTOL spoke about and on behalf of each other, as well as the people they were against.

## **Chapter Two: “Students’ Right to Their Own Language”: A Review**

When critics discuss “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” (SRTOL), they pay most attention to the following:

We affirm the students' right to their own patterns and varieties of language -- the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style. Language scholars long ago denied that the myth of a standard American dialect has any validity. The claim that any one dialect is unacceptable amounts to an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another. Such a claim leads to false advice for speakers and writers, and immoral advice for humans. A nation proud of its diverse heritage and its cultural and racial variety will preserve its heritage of dialects. We affirm strongly that teachers must have the experiences and training that will enable them to respect diversity and uphold the right of students to their own language. (CCCC 710-11)

These lines, generally referred to as “the resolution,” give readers a sense of how the CCCC understands language difference. The CCCC views a dialect as a reflection of a community’s identity. Dialects point to the regional and racial groups who not only live in the country, but also influence it as well. Dialects are indicative of social hierarchies that exist in the United States. Those at the top of these hierarchies *can* determine the validity of a dialect, which, in turn, *can* lead to linguistic oppression of those at the lower ends of the hierarchies. This, the CCCC makes clear, is wrong. That is why the CCCC encourages teachers to understand linguistics, respect linguistic diversity, and “uphold the right of students to their own language” (CCCC 711).

The resolution also provides a snapshot of how the CCCC speaks on behalf of people. Notice that the organization uses the first person plurals, “we” and “our.” This indicates that the organization is speaking on behalf of its members. Yet the organization is also speaking about, and hence, on behalf of, people when it discusses students, language scholars, and a proud nation seeking to “preserve its heritage of dialects” (CCCC 711). Moreover, the organization engages in Spivak’s notion of representation when it attempts to advocate for dialect speaking students and engages in re-presentation when it re-creates an American society in which Americans wish not to destroy dialects for fear that they will culturally destroy a part of themselves. In short, the CCCC speaks about, and for, its constituent members and for a vision of American society committed to language fairness; that is to say it endeavors to speak on behalf of behalf of its constituents but also on behalf of an ideal not yet realized.

Yet the resolution is not the only place where the CCCC speaks on behalf of others. The often-ignored background statement (which some critics don’t discuss) examines various issues addressed in the document including, but not limited to, sociolinguistics; history of the English language; standardized testing and its role in stigmatizing dialect speakers; and English textbooks used in the classroom. Within these discussions, the CCCC speaks about and for various groups, many of whom I will discuss in upcoming chapters.

The main problem with SRTOL is that it is written as if every member agrees with the document. In fact, just before and after its passage in 1974, several CCCC members voiced opposition to SRTOL making it clear that SRTOL did not represent or re-present their pedagogical beliefs, and, in some instances, the CCCC as an organization did not represent them. Readers, thus, will get a glimpse of how audiences responded both positively and negatively to having an organization speak on behalf of them.

The purpose of this chapter, however, is to help the reader understand better the varied reactions to the document. On the surface, it seems as if the responses can be categorized according to those who are proponents and opponents of the document and those who represent gradations in between. This is especially true of essays and letters written in the 1970s to the mid-1980s. However, during the late 1980s until today, the nature of debate regarding SRTOL shifted from validation or invalidation of the document to analysis and implementation. This does not mean that writers and teachers didn't express their opposition to or support for the document; rather it shows that they were struggling to move beyond the polarizing debate about the acceptability of the document to understanding what the document means to writing and the teaching of writing.

In all of these discussions, though, what critics have not focused on is the rhetorical strategy the CCCC used in its attempts to speak on behalf of teachers and students through SRTOL. In fact, I argue that by understanding the ways in which SRTOL speaks on behalf of others, writing scholars and teachers can gain a better (and much needed) understanding of the implications, both positive and negative, of speaking on behalf of others. Before I delve further into the rhetorical implications of SRTOL, I want to review how our understanding of the document has changed from its release until today.

Just as the understanding of SRTOL has changed throughout the years, so too have the terms used to describe our nation's dialects. For example, African American English Vernacular (AAEV), commonly used today with the term Ebonics, was referred by critics as "black dialect," "Black English Vernacular," "dialect of the urban black," and "Black English" throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Other terms used, and sometimes used interchangeably by critics, include "Edited American English" ([EAE] the term used in the SRTOL) and "Standard English," also

written as “standard English.” Additionally, there is also the term “Englishes” which implies that there is no standard English, but instead several varieties of English, whether these emerge within our national boundaries or within global contexts. Also used today are terms such as the “mother tongue,” which describes the language of the home and the “language of wider communication,” sometimes used to describe a standard language.

In fact, the committee who created the background statement on STROL makes a distinction between EAE and a standard English: EAE is the written dialect “which is meant to carry information about our representative problems and interests” (713). The Committee does not specifically define a standard English. Instead it provides a definition of what it is not. “. . . most linguists agree that there is no single homogenous American ‘standard.’ They also agree that, although the amount of prestige and power possessed by a group can be recognized through its dialect, no dialect is inherently good or bad” (713). Thus, what is referred to as Standard American English or Standard English or standard English (notice the differences in capitalizations) is a misnomer, since different communities may have different ideas of what a standard is. Moreover, the committee also recognizes that a standard is associated with prestige. Thus, it is not uncommon for the *s* in standard English to be capitalized to emphasize the prestige. Though I will use the terms African American English Vernacular (AAEV) and standard English, throughout this study, I will remain faithful to the various terms that authors of specific texts use when describing the dialects they discuss.

Before I go into depth about the initial reactions to the document, I want to provide readers with an historical understanding of how the document came into being. I will thus rely on first person accounts by three members of the committee: Richard Lloyd-Jones, Geneva Smitherman, and Elisabeth McPherson. Intertwined within these accounts are other critics who

have written articles and books about the history of the document and supplement the testimonies of Lloyd-Jones, Smitherman, and McPherson.

### **The Advent of “Students’ Right to Their Own Language”**

#### *Sociolinguistics and Civil Rights*

The first person accounts of Lloyd-Jones, Smitherman, and McPherson set the framework for how many scholars analyze SRTOL. All three examine the cultural, political, and educational events which influenced the formation of the document. To show the importance of SRTOL to the history of Rhetoric and Composition, both Lloyd-Jones and Smitherman examine the history of the field and how SRTOL fits into it. By doing this, they provide readers with a better understanding of how SRTOL relates to the history of the field, not just to the history of the organization that produced it.

Lloyd-Jones begins his work by emphasizing the importance of the CCCC to the field of Rhetoric and Composition. He points out that by the 1960s, the CCCC had been around for approximately twenty years. Its journal, *College Composition and Communication (CCC)*, had started to transition from a journal devoted mostly to conference summaries and proceedings to a journal that emphasized research on pedagogy and writing (1). Like Lloyd-Jones, Smitherman, in her essay, “The Historical Struggle for Language Rights in the CCCC,” discusses the importance of CCCC. She, however, focuses on the 1951 debate between Kenneth L. Knickerbocker and Donald J. Lloyd regarding the teaching of English and the privileging or devaluation of certain phrases used by people. She uses this debate as a foray into the discussion of CCCC’s historic interest in linguistics and language rights; this enables readers to see that SRTOL did not just come about because there was a sudden interest in linguistics and language rights in the 1960s.

What she, in effect, shows is that scholars in Rhetoric and Composition were discussing sociolinguistics and language rights two decades prior to the passage of SRTOL (7-9).

The debate between Lloyd and Knickerbocker, coupled with the growing scholarship on AAEV within sociolinguistics, corresponded to the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power of the 1950s and 1960s. In fact, McPherson, Smitherman, and Lloyd-Jones situate SRTOL within the Civil Rights movement. In the first paragraph of McPherson's piece, she refers to SRTOL as "more than a belated response to the civil rights movement; it was an acknowledgement that language, too, can be a weapon of prejudice, that language differences can shut people out of education" ("Bait/Rebait" 8). Unlike her "Historical Struggle" essay, Smitherman begins her "Retrospective" essay by discussing the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, as well as the Black Power movement (21). By doing this, she positions SRTOL within important American and African American cultural and political movements. Of course, Lloyd-Jones does not ignore the cultural happenings of the time either. He acknowledges that the "sit-ins and marches and murders [of civil rights leaders] in significant numbers . . . make clear that issues of oppression and power had to be settled, and language was an emblem of that oppression" (3). By emphasizing linguistic discrimination within American society, all three writers highlight how linguistic discrimination was a Civil Rights issue.

Interestingly, critics of SRTOL during the 1970s and early 1980s confirmed the existence of linguistic discrimination within the classroom. Lou Kelly, for example, focuses on how teachers who overemphasized the teaching of grammar to dialect speakers did so to "[preserve] the notion that, though all men are created equal, the language you learn in the home and the community where you are created stamps you inferior if it is not 'correct'"(255). In other words, such teachers as these had embraced the notion of linguistic inferiority and thus had continued



the perpetuation of a linguistic hierarchy. Gloria Glissmeyer echoes Lou Kelly's sentiments when she points to Hawaiian dialect speakers who "[speak] disparagingly of their own speech and [tell] of the embarrassment about the wish to conceal the speech of their own parents" (202). Thus, the individuals who knew they did not speak "correctly" internalized the sentiments of the larger community who viewed their language (and perhaps them) as inferior.

Just as members of the CCCC began tackling the issue of linguistic discrimination, the CCCC, as an organization, began tackling the issue of minority representation within its own rank and file. This issue came to the forefront at the 1968 CCCC convention in Minneapolis. In fact, both Lloyd-Jones and Smitherman highlight the convention as a decisive moment in the history of the CCCC and an influential one in the development of SRTOL. At the 1968 CCCC convention, attendees learned of Martin Luther King's death. Lloyd-Jones writes that because of King's assassination, the "second day of the Convention was put aside for the discussion of the implications of his murder" (3). Unlike Smitherman, he does not provide specifics about what occurred within the convention. Smitherman recounts that at the convention, Ernece Kelly delivered an address in which she criticized CCCC for not having minority representation at the conference and within its publications. Then Kelly made this important point: white scholars were dominating the discussion on African American English Vernacular and seemed to be more interested in how "we can upgrade or, if we're really successful, just plain *replace* [the dialect]" (qtd. in Smitherman, "Historical" 14).

Like Smitherman, other noted scholars point to Kelly's speech as an important historical event leading up to the creation of SRTOL. While they don't go into detail about the rhetorical ways in which Kelly spoke on behalf of others, they do point to the importance of Kelly's response to those who spoke about AAEV speakers. Keith Gilyard, for example, infers that the

CCCC special interest group, the Black Caucus, came into being in the 1970s because Black Caucus members, like Kelly in 1968, voiced their concerns regarding how white scholars became certified “instant experts” in African American literature and language (“African American” 636). Unlike Royster who felt “compelled to listen” (Royster 30) while white scholars analyzed and critiqued the African American community, Black Caucus members felt compelled to speak; in fact, they worked together to compose a resolution that “criticized the academic colonization of Black topics and also called for efforts to improve working conditions at historically Black colleges and universities and for publishers to increase the quality of their Black-oriented products” (Gilyard, “African American” 636). Known as the Seattle Resolution, this document allowed the Black Caucus to speak about causes and speak for people important to them. Most importantly, it gave African American scholars a voice in an organization that seemed to privilege the voices of white scholars (Gilyard, “African American” 636).

Kelly’s speech also plays an important role in an article by Carmen Kynard. Not only does Kynard discuss the speech Kelly gave at the 1968 convention, but she also goes into depth about Kelly’s work with the newspaper *Black Libre* and the journal *Negro American Literature Forum*. Through these publications, Kelly was able to discuss the education of African American college students who spoke and wrote in dialect. Kynard notes that Kelly’s work made “clear that black student-composers and black teacher-compositionists were engaging a praxis that fell outside of what white compositionists and CCCC were making central in the field at the time” (362).

By emphasizing Ernece Kelly’s role at the convention, Kynard, Gilyard, and Smitherman speak on behalf of Kelly, by stressing Kelly’s contributions and importance to the field of Rhetoric and Composition and the formation of SRTOL. Most importantly, they emphasize the

role that African Americans played in influencing the CCCC to address the issue of linguistic discrimination. Though they make clear that the number of African Americans in the CCCC was much lower in the 1960s than today, they also show how African American members sought to respond to how white scholars were speaking about and on behalf of African American students. Through the formation of the Black Caucus and the speech Kelly gave at the convention, black CCCC members were able to speak about AAEV, African American students, and the way in which they were educated.

One of the ways in which the CCCC responded to the critique that the organization valued white scholars more than African American ones was to devote its December 1968 issue of the *College Composition and Communication* (CCC) journal to matters related to AAEV and the pedagogy of African American students. In this particular issue, the CCCC was able to bring special attention to several writers, including four African American ones, who wrote articles on African American English Vernacular and the pedagogy of African American students. Smitherman concludes that the one of the main purposes of this CCC issue was for members to hear the voices of African American scholars (“Historical” 15-17). Smitherman writes, “The ‘Students’ Right’ resolution followed logically on the heels of the dramatic 1968 annual meeting of CCCC and the subsequent December 1968 issue of CCC, which were themselves affected by the social movements, political events, and assassinations in the world beyond academe” (“Historical” 17-18). Additionally, Smitherman emphasizes that CCCC was one of many academic organizations interested in promoting social justice within and outside of the academy. She notes that scholars affiliated with organizations such as the American Psychological Association, the Modern Language Association, and the American Sociological Association were interested in “working within their professional societies . . . to bring about mainstream

recognition and legitimacy to the culture, history and language of those on the margins” (“Retrospective” 21-22). Like these organizations, members of the CCCC wanted to address linguistic discrimination as a societal issue, not solely an educational one.

One of the ways in which linguistic discrimination could be tackled during the 1960s and 1970s was to make the public aware of linguistics research. In fact, Smitherman and Lloyd-Jones discuss how new theories within sociolinguistics contributed to the understanding of language, and thus, began to influence Rhetoric and Composition. Lloyd-Jones recounts that

socio-linguistics and psycho-linguistics—theories of language--began to edge out the formalism of syntax and phonology as our main studies. From philology we had learned that language changed in response to the social and political climate so it was easy to associate dialects with groupings of people, and to recognize that language responds to the realities of power. (1)

In other words, members of the CCCC became less interested in sentence structure and more interested in how language operates and changes through time. He mentions linguists that those in Rhetoric and Composition were reading: Noam Chomsky, Ferdinand de Saussure, Leonard Bloomfield, and Martin Joos, among others. He also discusses Black English and the conflicted feelings some CCCC members felt about Black English and the teaching of standard English to African American dialect-speaking students (1-3). By highlighting sociolinguistics, Lloyd Jones re-creates the CCCC as an organization dominated by members more interested in language and politics rather than creativity and technology.

Like some of the CCCC members who had to work through their conflicted feelings about AAEV and standard English, linguists were also examining their conflicted feelings about the teaching of standard English. Smitherman notes that linguists were challenging the

conventional method of using bidialectalism to teach dialect-speaking students. “Some language scholars had begun to question bidialectalism as a goal for the linguistically marginalized. They argued that the bidialectalism philosophy was only being promoted for those on the margins. Further, since linguistic research had demonstrated the linguistic adequacy of ‘nonstandard’ dialects, why wouldn’t the ‘system’ accept them?” (“Historical” 18) To these progressive scholars, bidialectalism promoted the supremacy of standard English to those who did not speak standard English and legitimized the system—that is the educational, political, and social systems—that prevented the “linguistically marginalized” from achieving the American dream of educational and economic betterment.

### *Teaching Students Standard English*

We see this debate regarding bidialectalism in the Patrick Bruch and Richard Marback 2005 anthology, *The Hope and the Legacy*. Their work is a collection of essays, focusing on SRTOL and the issues that SRTOL addresses. Their first section, to which I will focus particular attention, is entitled “The Context of ‘Students’ Right to Their Own Language.” Here they present readers with essays that academics were reading; thus, we get a brief glimpse of what is going on in the 1960s and the early 1970s, just before the passage of SRTOL.

The editors highlight essays that emphasize the burgeoning research on AAEV and bidialectalism within Rhetoric and Composition. By doing this, they also implicitly link SRTOL to the Civil Rights movement especially since some of the essays deal with the intertwining of racism and linguistic discrimination. In the first essay, Ossie Davis discusses how the English language was “one of the prime carriers of racism” (4) through its positive synonyms regarding “whiteness” and its negative synonyms regarding “blackness” (4). In the section,

“Why Teachers Fail,” Davis does not go into detail about pedagogy or curricula; rather he insinuates that Americans, not necessarily just teachers, did not want to acknowledge the presence of racism within the United States; teachers, however, could learn from the children they taught: Teachers could “learn from a subjugated people what its value, its history, its culture, its wealth as an independent people are” (8).

Just as Davis’s essay is an indictment of racism within the English language, Wayne O’Neil’s essay is an indictment of bidialectalism. He asserts that bidialectalism was a pedagogical strategy that inherently posited the superiority of standard English over other dialects. White, middle-class standard English speakers didn’t have to learn another dialect; it was always the speakers who used dialects other than standard English who had to undergo this pedagogy (11). Not surprisingly, the editors include Melvin J. Hoffman’s piece defending bidialectalism. After presenting arguments from James Sledd and Thomas Kochman criticizing bidialectalism, Hoffman notes the existence “of standardness [sic] in language” (28). He writes that in many parts of the world “bi-dialectalism is normal and accepted” (30). Most importantly, Hoffman highlights how proponents and opponents of bi-dialectalism were themselves bidialectal or polydialectal (32).

The very first line of Grace Holt’s article attempts to show what was happening in the African American community at the time: “The current drive by black people to affirm their cultural identity has important implications for theoretical bases of speech-language teaching functions in relationship to the quest for black awareness” (19). Thus, she establishes early on that her article will explore the disconnect between the teaching of English and the cultural pride some African Americans had for Black English (the term she uses). She believes the Ethno-Linguistic Approach, designed to teach and improve the language skills of black students in

inner-city Chicago, provides a holistic way of helping students learn standard English while allowing students to maintain their linguistic identity (20-21). The program was a “modified bi-dialectical” approach that did not call for a total separation of dialects (22).

Finally, J. Mitchell Morse’s article is designed to challenge what he perceives to be “romanticism” associated with the use of Black English. According to him, students were increasingly insisting that white universities not only accept Black English but use Black English “as a language of instruction” (37). He then goes on to defend the existence of standard English and notes that whites, too, have their own dialects. The difference, Morse emphasizes, is that white dialect speakers who attend college are willing to learn standard English in order to ensure their own educational and employment success (40).

Of course, Morse recognizes the psychological pain some students endure upon discovering that their dialects are considered inferior by the larger society; however, he believes that teachers should not tolerate college students who refuse to speak and write standard English in the classroom (41). As he sees it, Black English “is not a satisfactory medium for the communication of precise information or the development of clear ideas” (42). He then points to African Americans of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries who used standard English when writing and speaking. Towards the end of the article, he characterizes Black English as the “language of slavery”—a language that represents the illiteracy of both the poor white overseer and the poor black slave (42-43).

All of the authors in this section of the Bruch and Marback book seek to address the education of black students who speak and write in dialect. While Ossie Davis gives a first-person account of what it is like to be African American, Morse tells his readers how African Americans feel about standard English. In this respect, he speaks on behalf of African

Americans by articulating and critiquing their thoughts on standard English. Holt, meanwhile, speaks on behalf of African Americans by describing how they currently feel about their dialect and attempts to show how African Americans contribute to the education of black dialect speaking students. In other words, African American parents and their children are proactive when it comes to their education.

Like *The Hope and Legacy*, Stephen Parks' *Class Politics: The Movement for the "Students' Right to Their Own Language"* captures the historical educational events of the 1960s and 1970s and how these events contributed to the formation of SRTOL. He specifically focuses on the formation of educational organizations that spoke about and for a variety of constituencies including students, professors, impoverished communities, and professional organizations. Parks pays particular attention to four main organizations that addressed issues which overlapped with the SRTOL committees: Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Black Panther Party (BPP), Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and New University Conference (UNC). All of these organizations engaged in Spivak's notion of representation in that they attempted to provide enfranchisement to those traditionally shut out of the political, economic, and educational spheres. While the goals of the individual organizations were distinct, they were also relatable to the issues that the CCCC would address in SRTOL.

The Black Panther Party, for example, fought for African Americans to not only have economic and political equality, but also have voice. Parks notes that the BPP was heavily influenced by the SNCC chairperson Stokely Carmichael's theories on Black Power. In his famous 1966 "Black Power" speech, Carmichael asserts that black people have to "define themselves as they see fit, and organize themselves as they see fit." His speech was an acknowledgement and a repudiation of how others, namely whites, had spoken on behalf of



African Americans. Carmichael also emphasizes that “black people must be in positions of power, doing and articulating for themselves.” In other words, black people have to speak for and about black people. The BPP did this namely through its publications and its organized protests, as well as through its food, clothing, medical and legal drives established for impoverished African Americans (Carson x-xi; Parks 36-37).

Though most people look at the BPP as a social organization, the BPP was also an educational one as well. The organization promoted an educational system, that, in the words of its October 1966 Black Panther Party Platform, “exposes the true nature of this decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our [African American] role in the present-day society” (2). To this end, the BPP mandated members take “political education classes” and BPP leaders read for at least two hours daily (“Black Panther” 6).

The BPP influenced other educational organizations such as the New University Conference. NUC, formed in 1968, consisted of academics who stressed “political action within universities” (Parks 56). NUC, Parks writes, “[aligned] itself with the Black Panthers” (37) and established caucuses within academic organizations affiliated with sociology, psychology, anthropology, et cetera. NUC’s program, OUTS (Open Up the Schools), was a critique of how “higher education now served the function of training future employees for corporate America” (58); to address this issue, NUC suggested that colleges and universities recruit nontraditional students (single parents, for example) and end the educational tracking of students. Like the Black Panthers, NUC, emphasized education and “education that teaches us our true history and our role in present day society” (qtd. in Parks 58-59).

In fact, Parks devotes a good portion of the book discussing how NUC influenced the CCCC. He points to NUC's sponsorship of workshops on composition, linguistics, and curricula biases at the 1969 CCCC conference (Parks 133). He also points to resolutions presented to the 1969 CCCC Executive Committee. A memo entitled "The NUC at CCC and a Look ahead to NCTE" included the following resolution:

CCCC and NCTE meetings and NCTE Executive Committees should work actively to make nonstandard dialects acceptable in all schools from kindergarten on and create an active articulation between the elementary schools, secondary schools, junior colleges and universities to deal with this problem. Linguists and English teachers should concentrate not on trying to teach everyone to speak and write upper middle class white dialect but rather on changing the attitude of society that discriminates against other dialects. Their efforts should be devoted to teaching the truths that all dialects are effective and valuable and that no dialect is any more indicative than any other of intelligence or even language ability on the part of the speaker. (qtd. in Parks 139)

According to Parks, this resolution attracted the most attention at the Executive Committee meeting and "had spawned a formal CCCC committee" that would examine social dialects (140). Most importantly, this resolution called for the CCCC and NCTE to speak for those who speak nonstandard dialects. The NUC resolution called for the organizations to engage in advocacy by promoting the equality and importance of dialects.

Though this resolution did not explicitly focus on the integration of schools and universities, it did implicitly show one of the problems occurring during the initial integration of schools and universities. For the first time, many teachers who did not have to work with

linguistically diverse students found themselves educating students who did not speak or write solely in standard English. Realizing that teachers needed to be proactive in understanding linguistics and the teaching of dialect-speaking students, McPherson says that the committee who created the SRTOL wrote the background statement because “universities have not provided linguistic training to help teachers understand [SRTOL]” (“Bait/Rebait” 10). Additionally, Smitherman points out that many CCCC members “[needed] to be educated about the current research on language variation, usage, and the history of American English” (“Retrospective” 22). Thus, not only were CCCC committee members who created SRTOL interested in linguistics, but they were also interested in how linguistics could inform teaching. Linguistics, McPherson implies, is important to helping teachers understand the dialects their students speak and how to “deal sympathetically with all their students” (“Bait/Rebait” 10). Lloyd-Jones comes out more forcefully when he states that teachers who work with the “nontraditional student” are ready to understand “Black English” (3) and advocate for the linguistic training among teachers.

One advocate for linguistic training among teachers, Sister Mary Louise Vandover, at the 1975 CCCC conference, argued that teachers needed to help students understand the flexibility of language and how people use it. She says, “In order to stress language, it will be necessary to educate and or reeducate many teachers in the principles discussed in the background statement to the resolution [SRTOL]. It will be necessary to reeducate parents and the general public on the nature of language itself” (4). Vandover not only addresses the lack of knowledge regarding language, but also the lack of knowledge of how language relates to rhetoric: “We should develop courses that teach the skills necessary for students to size up their audiences in order to select the most appropriate language for the situation” (3). In other words, students need to

realize that medical jargon is appropriate for doctors who talk to doctors, but not appropriate for doctors who talk to patients.

Even those who opposed SRTOL during the 1970s acknowledged that teachers found themselves encountering not only students who did not speak standard English, but also theories on how to teach these students. These theories, of course, were based on an understanding of linguistics. David L. Shores, in fact, highlights three main approaches of helping students learn standard English: eradication, bidialectalism, and “tolerance of dialectal variation” (11). Shores is against the last, for he emphasizes what he called a “sociolinguistic fact”: “Even in the most egalitarian and fluid of societies, usually a standard emerges and becomes a part of the sociolinguistic diversity. As a rule, that standard is the variety spoken and written by educated people” (13). While he doesn’t argue outright for eradication or bidialectalism, he does believe that the CCCC uses SRTOL to “denigrate the acquisition of Standard English,” which he claims leads to a new type of language “despotism” (14). What I want to emphasize from the Shores’ article is what Geneva Smitherman emphasizes in her “Language Rights” article: teachers were encountering students who spoke and/or wrote in a different dialect than their own, and teachers needed guidance on how they should address this challenge, something SRTOL sought to address.

One of the things I notice in Smitherman’s, McPherson’s, and Lloyd-Jones’s articles is that they do not adequately address the ways in which teachers worked with AAEV speakers, Appalachian speakers, et cetera, prior to the Civil Rights Movement. What they address is how teachers respond (or don’t respond) to dialect speakers in the classroom during the early days of integration. While they may have been right about the lack of linguistic education among many English teachers, the implicit assumption is that most teachers did not understand how to work

with dialect speakers, when, in fact, some teachers had been teaching dialect speakers long before *Brown v. Board of Education*. Thus, their re-presentation of teachers is limited. Though Smitherman does discuss bidialectalism as a response to how to work with AAEV speaking students during the 1950s and 1960s, (therefore, showing that teachers were working with AAEV speakers), the major image I am left with from these articles is that all teachers just did not have *much* exposure to AAEV, Appalachian, and/or Chicano English speakers and little to no experience with how to provide instruction for dialect speaking students.

This type of re-presentation of the English teacher excluded the experiences of thousands of teachers who not only worked with dialect speakers, but also worked with first-generation college students at historically black colleges and universities (HBCU). Thus, when Lloyd-Jones and Smitherman discuss the influx of “nontraditional” students in college during the 1970s, they seem to ignore the fact that HBCUs had been working with “nontraditional” students since their establishment during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Just before the creation of SRTOL, Lloyd-Jones says that there were several members of the CCCC, especially those who taught in community colleges, who “daily dealt with first generation college students, with older students, with people generally who felt like outsiders—these faculty mostly in community colleges were ready to relate their teaching of language to social concerns” (3). They wanted linguistic training that would help them discover ways to help the traditionally excluded academically succeed in the academy. SRTOL, Smitherman states, was a “[response] to a developing crisis in college composition classrooms, a crisis caused by the cultural and linguistic mismatch between higher education and the nontraditional (by virtue of color and class) students who were making their imprint upon the academic landscape for the first time in history” (“Historical” 19). Notice that she uses the word “crisis” twice to highlight the urgency or the exigency of the situation being

addressed. But notice, also, that she assumes that “nontraditional” students had not been a part of “the academic landscape.”

While the works of Smitherman and Lloyd-Jones emphasize the emergence of the nontraditional student into the college classroom, they do not go in depth regarding open admissions policies many colleges adopted during the 1960s and 1970s. The most famous of the open admissions universities was City University of New York (CUNY). According to the former CUNY president, Robert Marshak, the open admissions policy “did *not* guarantee a place at City College (or any other senior college at the City University) to every graduate of a New York City public high school” (Marshak and Wurtemburg 14). Rather, the open admissions process allowed public school graduates in New York City to attend one of the community colleges; additionally, “students who maintained an 80 percent average or better, *or* who finished in the top half of their graduating class could enter a CUNY senior college” (14). This policy was put into place when the Board of Higher Education realized that contrary to its mission of educating working class students, its restrictive admission policies prevented many low-income students from entering the educational institution (Marshak and Wurtemburg 14-15). According to David E. Lavin and David B. Crook, this realization came partly as a result of a 1969 student protest (led by African Americans, Latinos, and progressive whites) regarding the lack of minority representation at CUNY (392). While many in the media assumed that open admissions would primarily benefit blacks and Latinos who came from working class families, Lavin and Crook assert that it was beneficial to whites as well; “almost a third of white senior-college freshmen were open admissions students” (399). Moreover, their study shows that white open admissions students were more likely than minority students to receive a bachelor’s degree (415-16). Thus, Lavin and Crook use their article to correct the misre-presentation of CUNY and the

people who benefitted from the open admissions policy. However, the important thing to remember is what Mina P. Shaughnessy emphasized in her work 1977 *Errors and Expectations*: The students who came to CUNY represented “academic winners and losers from the best and worst high schools in the country, the children of the lettered and illiterate, the blue-collared, the white-collared, and the unemployed . . .” (2). The students also represented communities where people spoke and wrote in dialects other than standard English.

Thus, we can see that during the 1960s and 1970s, teachers were encountering students who spoke dialects other than standard English; additionally, the CCCC was being influenced by members who took an interest in sociolinguistics and wanted the CCCC to take a stand on language discrimination within the educational system. Hence, we see the pressure the CCCC felt to take a stand and address issues related to students’ right to their own language. Because I will provide more in-depth information regarding the creation of SRTOL in subsequent chapters, I will begin my next section exploring the reactions to SRTOL during and after its creation.

### **Reactions to “Students’ Right to Their Own Language”**

Although the formal membership of CCCC approved SRTOL in 1974, the CCCC actually mailed its members the first formal draft of SRTOL entitled “Student’s Right to His Own Language” in 1972. This resolution, which had been accepted by the Executive Committee in March of 1972, elicited various responses from CCCC members. Many of these responses were initially published in the *College Composition and Communication (CCC)*, the official journal of the CCCC. In 1972, William H. Pixton wrote that the document would “result in a chaos of dialects that will hamper communication and promote ignorance” (Letter 300). As if showing how this could be achieved, John R. Henrickson proclaimed, “Praiz be for I hav live to

see grandpas personl-type Tibetan-Amurican inglish vidikated” (300). Robert P. Saalbach believed that STROL advocated an “anything goes” approach to the teaching of writing (416). And Garland Cannon, in his 1973 article, “Multidialects: The Student’s Right to His Own Language” maintained that the “proposed resolution may not be realistically implemented in the classroom” especially since teachers were not trained in linguistics nor cross-cultural communication (383). As readers can see, Pixton, Henrickson, and Cannon re-present SRTOL as pedagogically dangerous since, from their perspective, the document promotes “ignorance” and is unrealistic.

Despite criticism of the document, “Student’s Right to His Own Language”—later renamed “Students’ Right to Their Own Language”—was passed by the official membership in 1974. Of course, its passage was controversial, especially since it (a) passed with only seventy nine votes (Parks 173) and (b) probably “could not have been voted on and probably would not have passed” had the CCCC’s Executive Committee not modified, in 1972, the original rules about what was considered a quorum and a majority at its CCCC conference business meetings (Parks 198).<sup>16</sup> Not only did the document undergo a name change replete with changes in the pronouns (going from a male gender to the neutral plural), but it also included a background statement on linguistics and education.

When SRTOL officially passed, several critics wrote articles and letters regarding the document, especially within the first ten years of its adoption. Many of these publications focused on the writer’s stance and took on a “you’re either for or against” SRTOL tone. From 1984-1994, the number of publications regarding SRTOL dwindled. Despite this, the articles that did come out focused on the nuances of the document and how the document influenced teaching. Since 1994, there has been an uptick in the number of publications devoted to the study



of SRTOL. Unlike the first decade of SRTOL's release, many of the critics view SRTOL in a favorable light.

In reviewing the critical responses to SRTOL, I discovered that many could be categorized by the following: 1) the role of teachers in helping students achieve higher education and employment; 2) the philosophy of language; 3) the use of SRTOL in teaching; and 4) the teaching of students of color. Though some publications can easily encompass two or more categories, I have decided that using these main categories will make it easier for the reader to understand the various interpretations and reinterpretations of the document.

### *Teachers' Role in Employment and Educational Preparation*

Many of the early articles and letters generally focused on the roles that teachers had in helping students achieve access to higher education and employment. SRTOL opponents, such as Pixton, Susan Passler Miller, Shores, and J. Mitchell Morse felt that SRTOL was inherently antithetical to the teaching of a standard English. They felt that if teachers did not teach standard English, students would find themselves ghettoized educationally and socially. Though Thomas J. Farrell believed that SRTOL was justified in advising teachers to not emphasize the teaching of EAE to novice writers, he asserted that SRTOL did a disservice to students since SRTOL "[appears] to be against attempts being made *at any time* in the instructional process to get students to learn to write in—or at least to 'edit in'—the conventions of syntax, spelling, and punctuation that constitute EAE" (349). Farrell, like the aforementioned writers, seemed to believe that EAE was better especially because it was a "more readable than unconventional forms of writing" (348). However, what he failed to acknowledge is that EAE appears to be more "readable" because it is in a form that he and others are used to reading.

Interestingly, both Pixton and Morse, like Henrickson, engaged in derision to make their points. In his “Open Letter of Congratulation to the NCTE for the 1974 Resolutions” Pixton sarcastically congratulated his NCTE “colleagues” for “passing the resolution affirming students’ own rights to their language, for the implementation of this sound resolution will help students remain as blissfully ignorant in the future as they are in high school, and thus, they will never know anything of history, philosophy, mathematics, politics, government or English” (93). Here he implied that students would be intellectually deficient, and thus, unable to enjoy future educational and perhaps economic prospects. In a 1976 editorial to the *New York Times*, J. Mitchell Morse mocked SRTOL by publishing what he implied were writings by college students. After each excerpt, he wrote: “Students have a right to their own language, says the Council,” thus re-representing the CCCC as an organization that condones misspellings, subject-verb disagreements, and other syntax issues (“Riting” 38).

Notice how Pixton and Morse engage in the rituals of speaking. By making fun of NCTE, the umbrella group for the CCCC, and the CCCC itself, they assert their superiority over the organization that created SRTOL. By doing this, they re-create the CCCC as an irresponsible organization that cannot and should not speak for students. Additionally, they also make the students for whom they speak, seem “blissfully ignorant” about the conventions of written language and the role that not mastering these conventions play in their ability to get into and succeed in college.

### *Philosophy of Language*

During the 1970s and 1980s, critics also commented on the philosophical issue of language and what it meant for people to have a “right to their own language.” This debate

highlighted not just the philosophical beliefs about language but also the pedagogical belief about how language should be taught. This, in turn, led critics to try to understand how SRTOL informs or does not inform the teaching of writing.

SRTOL proponents, including Glissmeyer, Lawrence Freeman, and James Sledd wrote articles highlighting their philosophical views on language and the way in which SRTOL conformed to their beliefs. Taking a post-colonial perspective, Gloria Glissmeyer believed that there was an “individual” right to language. To Glissmeyer, language was “a tool for our own and not someone else’s imposed use” (203). Language, Glissmeyer emphasized, could lead to personal growth because it allowed the individual to express himself or herself (206-07). Freeman took the philosophical discussion of language a step further to argue that SRTOL’s belief in the individuals’ “right to their own language” was justified through the First, Ninth, and Fourteenth Amendments of the United States (25). James Sledd, meanwhile, discussed language from a sociopolitical standpoint. Standard English was the “bosses’ language” (669); this language, he implied, should not be forced upon students who do not wish write or speak it. The students he primarily focused on were those who were impoverished economically: he wrote that these students “have much greater concerns than the details of usage, the study of socially graded synonyms” (673). Though he said that the document was not perfect, he, nonetheless, praised the Committee for recognizing the diversity of student experiences; the protection of students when their dialects are attacked or ridiculed; and recognizing the need to improve current pedagogy (673-75).

Like Vandover, Glissmeyer, and Kelly, Milton Baxter supported and saw the need for SRTOL. According to Baxter, SRTOL could encourage dialogue between teacher and student, and, if implemented correctly, would help teachers “run the risk of learning their [students’]

language” (681). His issue was that the “right to language” had not been adequately addressed in the document. Baxter, for example, pointed to the fact that SRTOL focused on written and spoken language, but not necessarily on cultural behaviors used for rhetorical purposes. Should a teacher uphold his/her students’ right to their own language when students rhetorically engage in behaviors (such as “eye rolling”) not completely accepted in mainstream America?

The idea that language was rhetoric and a “social act” led some critics to question the idea that an individual had a “right” to language. Allen Smith, in fact, called language a “social act.” He believed that individuals “did not have a right to ‘their own’ language” (155). If an individual’s language were looked upon as a “right,” then Smith asserted, “[We] have no right to change it at any point” (156). For Smith, language was about the rhetoric between a speaker (or writer) and an audience. Like Pixton and Morse, Smith believed that teaching “clarity, precision, specificity, and logic” (158) were important; and like them, he implied that all of the aforementioned could be accomplished through the knowledge of standards and an exposure of the “best writing from the past” (157).

The idea that language was a form of communication that must be understood by two or more people was evident in the pro-con article, published in the 1974 issue of *Inside English: Journal of the English Council of California Two-Year Colleges*. Discussing the need for students to understand EAE, the anonymous writer, speaking on behalf of society, explained, “I for one will not lead the student to expect that society will trouble itself much to accommodate him” (“Students’ Right” 2). In other words, the student must accommodate to society. This, of course, is reminiscent of Allen Smith’s belief of language being a “social act” and is a critique of the way in which SRTOL assumes that standard English speakers should accommodate the linguistic needs of those who speak variants of standard English.

Since 1994, there have been more publications on the history and acceptance of *SRTOL*. Many of these accounts have already been discussed earlier. Though Keith Gilyard's article, "Holdin' It Down: Students' Right and the Struggle for Diversity" is a critique of Stephen Parks' work, he questions how a student's right to language can be institutionalized. In some ways, Patrick Bruch and Richard Marback address that issue.

Examining *SRTOL* as a document which specifically addressed racial justice through dignity, Bruch and Marback sought to show that "dignity" was not just a moral concept, but was also a form of "political practice." In their 1997 article, "Race Identity, Writing, and the Politics of Dignity: Reinvigorating the Ethics of 'Students' Right to Their Own Language,'" the authors explored how dignity was a determining factor to how people "interact democratically." While the authors acknowledged the *SRTOL* promoted the dignity of students who use dialects other than standard English, they also said that *SRTOL* endorsed the assimilation of students through its confirmation of EAE as a common language. Thus, *SRTOL* ultimately encouraged the institutionalization of students within the dominant language culture.

Not only did Bruch and Marback examine the concept of dignity within *SRTOL*, but they also examined the ever-changing understanding of "rights" in their 2002 work, "Race, Literacy and the Value of Rights Rhetoric in Composition Studies." For example, "rights" could be limited to or could encompass voting rights, citizenship rights, civil rights, et cetera. Bruch and Marback raised several questions about rights as discussed in *SRTOL*. "When we, as teachers, acknowledge the rights of others, how far must we go in order to protect and advocate for those rights? Should our advocacy aim at a kind of social engineering that works to shift the accepted status of mainstream conventions, marginalized conventions, or both?" (662) Thus, Bruch and Marback questioned how far a teacher could go in terms of speaking on behalf of others and how

far teachers could go in promoting their own philosophy of language to their students and to the society.

### *The Use of SRTOL for Teaching*

Though it seemed that many critics interpreted SRTOL as a justification for not teaching standard English, critic Lou Kelly in his article, “Is Competent Copyreading<sup>17</sup> a Violation of the Students’ Right to Their Own Language” discussed how SRTOL could be used to inform teaching. He asserted that copyreading was not a violation of SRTOL. Students should be allowed to “speak their own language on paper, with their own voices, without worrying about the social conventions” (258). Afterward, teachers should discuss with students how audiences might respond rhetorically to student writing and how students could influence the way the audience responded to it.

As mentioned earlier, during the late 1970s and early 1980s, writers made clear whether or not they supported or opposed SRTOL. In 1985, Eleanor Kutz articulated a more nuanced approach to SRTOL in her article, “Between Students’ Language and Academic Discourse: Interlanguage as Middle Ground.” Instead of focusing her article on AAEEV speakers (as others had done), she instead discussed the need for all students to learn academic discourse, which she surmised most students did not know when they entered college. According to Kutz, teaching academic discourse was not antithetical to SRTOL. In fact, Kutz argued that SRTOL justified the teaching of academic discourse because it encouraged the development of multiple styles of writing, rather than a replacement of a writing style (388). To her SRTOL did not represent an “everything goes” approach to teaching writing, a charged leveled by opponents of SRTOL.

Instead, she asserted that SRTOL promoted an “everything goes somewhere” approach to writing (386).

Other critics asserted that SRTOL was applicable to the teaching of voice and style. Though his 1988 paper presentation at the CCCC did not spend considerable time discussing SRTOL, Randall Albers believed that SRTOL could be used to teach voice. Deeming that the story workshop method was the most effective way to teach voice, Albers said that this method worked best if teachers accept “students’ right to their own language, their cultural background, and their skill level” (10). Paul Butler, in his 2008 article, believed that SRTOL’s interest in the students’ “dialect of their nurture or whatever dialect in which they find their own identity and style,” reinforced the belief that style was important component of content in writing. He argued that Rhetoric and Composition had not paid enough attention to how SRTOL addressed style not only in the classroom but also in the public sphere (Butler 68-70). Thus, we see the beginnings of how SRTOL is re-presented as a document that can be used to teach writing.

Though there were articles written during the late twentieth century arguing that SRTOL could be used to teach writing, there were few books or articles showing *how* SRTOL could be incorporated into the curricula. During the early twenty-first century, however, that changed. Scott Wible’s 2006 “Pedagogies of the ‘Students’ Right’ Era: The Language Curriculum Research Group’s Project for Linguistic Diversity” examined the pedagogy of the Language Curriculum Research Group (LCRG) whose goal, during the 1960s and 1970s, was to “create exercises and writing assignments for a composition textbook that would allow students to learn about the language varieties of their communities as well as how to edit their prose to reflect the SE conventions expected by most teachers in college courses” (446). By providing concrete

examples of writing assignments and readings found in this unpublished textbook, Wible showed his readers what SRTOL-inspired exercises looked like.

Like LCRG that used principles promoted by SRTOL to create pedagogy, Valerie Felita Kinloch also used principles found in SRTOL to shape her class. In her 2005 work, “Revisiting the Promise of *Students’ Right to Their Own Language*: Pedagogical Strategies,” Kinloch set out to show readers how she interpreted SRTOL within her composition classroom. Kinloch structured her composition course so that students could help select reading materials. The materials they selected dealt with pedagogy and language issues. The texts were used to explicitly discuss SRTOL and issues related to the document.

While it seemed that many of the writers during the 1990s and 2000s were supportive of SRTOL, readers need to be cognizant that not everyone was enthusiastic about the document. In 2004, Allen Berger, for example, wrote that the document was outdated in regards to its discussion of language acquisition and the relationship between dialect and employability (19-20). Likewise, Jeff Zorn, in 2010, asserted that the SRTOL “feeds into a reactionary politics of ethnic-cultural chauvinism” (313).

One of the major issues regarding the acceptability of SRTOL revolves around teacher understanding of the document, and, more importantly, teacher knowledge that the document exists. In 1993, Terry Lynn Irons presented research regarding acceptance of the principles of SRTOL at three unnamed colleges. He received 423 responses, around 90% of them from students and around 9% from instructors. Unfortunately, the study did not indicate the type of colleges (teaching institution, research institution, Ivy League, et. cetera.) participating in the survey, nor did it discuss the region(s) where the colleges were located. Having this information could give people a sense of whether SRTOL was accepted more at specific types of higher



education institutions as well as give people a sense of whether there were regional differences in terms of acceptability.

Irons acknowledged that the vast majority of the respondents were white and represented “essentially white attitudes” (64). The survey showed that 50% of the respondents agreed that “students should be able to use in school the variety of language they grow up speaking at home”; 45% agreed that “students should be able to speak their home language in the classroom”; and 27% agreed that “students should be able to write in their home language in the classroom” (70). Irons pointed out in his discussion that 96% agreed that “the function of the schools is to teach Standard English.” He asked about what this percentage meant in light of the linguistic diversity SRTOL advocated (62). Unfortunately, Irons did not reveal if the students and instructors filling out the form were in fields related to Rhetoric and Composition or to literature or if they read all of the SRTOL document (including the background statement) or only the SRTOL resolution.

The next major study done on SRTOL was conducted from 1996-1998 and was published in 2003. In her article “Race, Class(es), Gender, and Age: The Making of Knowledge Diversity,” Elaine Richardson noted that despite the numerous publications about SRTOL in academic journal articles related to Rhetoric and Composition, the survey showed that 41.6 % of CCCC members and 79.3% of NCTE did not know about SRTOL. Additionally, 38.5% of those teaching on the university level were not aware of SRTOL and 55.6% of those teaching on the community college level were not familiar with SRTOL. Thus, this article allowed readers to think about not only the lack of knowledge about SRTOL among professionals of English, but also how SRTOL—and the CCCC—failed to influence the teaching of writing among teachers at the time (58-62).

*The Teaching of Students of Color*

Just as we do not have many studies on teacher acceptance of SRTOL, we also do not have many studies on student acceptance of SRTOL. In addition to the Irons article I discussed earlier, another article I found examining student acceptance was Valerie Kinloch's article, "'To Not Be a Traitor of Black English': Youth Perceptions of Language Rights in an Urban Context." One section of the article explored how two Harlem-based students viewed their own dialects in light of SRTOL. Her research showed that the students had contradictory attitudes towards SRTOL. Philip liked how SRTOL valued dialect speakers and their contributions to society, but he wondered how SRTOL would be used to help dialect speakers, especially African Americans, achieve a quality education. Like Philip, Khaleeq appreciated SRTOL and its emphasis on preserving linguistic cultures. However, he felt that SRTOL could potentially be used to justify "vulgar language" and a refusal to learn standard English: "No person has a right to have that power in taking away others' culture, but the students don't have a right to use vulgar language because of anger or to not learn how to use standardized English to get ahead" (qtd. in Kinloch 122-123).

While Kinloch's article is important in terms of showing us how students respond to SRTOL, most articles that discuss students and SRTOL speak about students without incorporating student voices. This is especially true during 1970s and early 1980s with the proliferation of "pro and con" articles about SRTOL. These articles not only justify the dichotomy between supporters and proponents of SRTOL but they also allow proponents and opponents to define themselves and the students for whom they advocated.

One of the most interesting “pro-con” articles involved a re-imagining of a conference. This re-imagining allowed for the writer to speak on behalf of other people. In Stephen Judy’s “Editor’s Page: The Students [sic] Right to Their Own Language: A Dialogue” Judy imagined a convention debate among a high school English teacher, a parent, a journalist, and a linguist. Not surprisingly the linguist and the high school English teacher defended SRTOL and the parent and journalist opposed SRTOL. They debated the definition and existence of standard English; the purpose of school and how schools prepared students for the world; and exactly who benefitted from SRTOL. What is most fascinating about the article is how Judy attempted to re-present a typical teacher, parent, journalist, and linguist. For example, the parent said, “I can be a pluralist, too. I see why, for example, Black people have been insisting on having their own literature included in the schools. Black pride and all that” (7). By doing this, Judy hinted that the parent was white, without actually saying it, and looked at “Black pride and all that” from a racist, if not, sarcastic perspective. The teacher, on the other hand, was defensive when the journalist said that the teacher would not “impose standard English” on students, but instead “frighten them into using [a standard dialect]”: “I am not passive with my kids,” the teacher said. “I have them writing all the time, speaking all the time. They are constantly engaged in using language in new situations” (8). By the end of the debate, nothing was resolved. This non resolution is important for it hints that SRTOL, by the publication of this 1978 article, had not resolved any debates regarding the pedagogy of English and would not resolve it in the near future.

In fact this debate was carried on in the 1980 through the “Bait/Rebait: ‘The Students’ Right to Their Own Language” article published in the *English Journal*. This time, Elisabeth McPherson, one of the key CCCC members who helped create SRTOL, argued that SRTOL was not about restricting the use of EAE; rather it was about students understanding how to use a

variety of dialects in a variety of situations. Moreover, SRTOL was designed to encourage teachers to study language issues as a part of their pedagogical training so that they would be able to work with students who did not speak and/or write in standard English (8, 12).

At the other end of the spectrum, C. Lamar Thompson and Juanita V. Williamson pointed out the problems teachers had in evaluating students based on SRTOL. As an example, they wrote of the teacher “who said at a meeting of college English teachers, ‘When my Black student writes ‘he done it,’ I smile and tell him that is his dialect. When my white student writes, ‘he done it,’ I call him in and tell him that is not his dialect” (qtd. in McPhearson, Thompson, and Williamson 9). Of course, one of the issues that Thompson and Williamson inadvertently pointed out and unfortunately did not comment on was that the teacher in the example clearly did not have the linguistic training to understand that whites too could speak African American English Vernacular, especially if they lived in a community where it was spoken; moreover Southern English shares some similarities to AAEEV and if the student in the example spoke Southern English and the teacher did not know it, then she would definitely need linguistic training. What was not said but was understood was that SRTOL, according to Thompson and Williamson, allowed for black students to be graded more leniently than white students.

Notice how the pro-con articles assume that the primary beneficiaries of SRTOL are African American students. Though the resolution itself does not specify a race of people to protect and the background statement alludes to a variety of dialects including African American English Vernacular, the general assumption is that SRTOL is for black students. Both Thompson and Williamson and the imagined mother in the Judy piece treat African American students as the “Other.” The imagined mother and Thompson and Williamson assume to know how African Americans speak and the perspectives African Americans have about language. Of course,

Thompson and Williamson and Judy are not the only critics to link SRTOL to African Americans. Pixton, Sledd, Kelly, and Baxter do as well. By defining the beneficiaries of SRTOL as black, the critics re-create the United States as a country with two dialects—standard English and AAEV; they also ignore the various forms of Spanglish, Hawaiian Creole, Cajun, and other dialects that Americans use in their daily lives.

Additionally, some critics also assume that there is only one way to communicate within academic circles. The focus on students needing to know standard English takes a back-seat to the fact that some scholars have been able to blend standard English and other languages and dialects. In 1991, one critic, D. Alexander Holiday, believed SRTOL was important not only for students, but for teachers. In this autobiographical essay, Holiday wrote of being “whitewashed” as a college student and feeling compelled to give up his voice (16). What makes this work important is that it is an academic piece which merges elements of AAEV into it. Holiday thus shows that AAEV can coexist within academic discourse. In fact Holiday wrote, “I have taken a few liberties with *my* language to present a discourse in *your* language” (16). This, he went to say, represented a form of double-consciousness, an attempt to reconcile AAEV with EAE (16).<sup>18</sup>

Holiday’s paper helps readers understand how an African American writer feels about SRTOL and how he would have appreciated SRTOL being incorporated into his school curriculum. Sensing that African Americans would approve of SRTOL, Elizabeth Fitts, in her 1991 paper presented to the Meeting of the Alabama Association for Developmental Education, attempted to speak on behalf of African American students when she wrote, “Many of our African-American students would quickly agree with the Language Statement of CCCC and the thinking of the members of the socio-politico-linguistic camp” (6). The problem I have with

Fitt's statement is the assumption that African American students would automatically agree with the statement. Unlike Kinloch, Fitts did not interview African American students to get their perspectives on SRTOL.

Though there were critics who defined the SRTOL student as being African American, there were also critics who asserted who the SRTOL student is not. Bruce Horner, for example, argued that SRTOL was not designed to help English Language Learners. He posited that SRTOL privileged English and dialects of English, especially since SRTOL background statement only mentioned early settlers coming from Britain, but not other countries where English was not spoken. He also criticized SRTOL for assuming that each dialect of English was "discrete and homogenous" (743). As far as he was concerned SRTOL promoted an "English Only" policy in the classroom. Thus, the only students who had a "right to their own language" were those who spoke English.

Though there are scholars today who link SRTOL to African American students, more scholars are examining the document in relationship to other groups of people. A collection of essays, *Affirming Students' Right to Their Own Language*, features articles showing how SRTOL responds to the historical legacies of English Standard schools in Hawaii and Native American boarding schools. Additionally, the book also shows how SRTOL is being undermined by current educational policies such as No Child Left Behind. Unlike Horner, who asserted that "Students' Right" only applied to dialects of English, several scholars in *Affirming Students' Right* apply SRTOL to English Language Learners. What makes *Affirming Students' Right* unique, however, is the transnational focus of SRTOL. Several scholars write of how the principles of SRTOL are carried out in countries including Greece, India, and South Africa. By

and large, the purpose of *Affirming Students' Right* is to show teachers how SRTOL can inform pedagogy and to provide concrete examples of how SRTOL can be used in the classroom.

Though it seems from many of the essays and books published that critics assumed African American students as the beneficiaries of STROL, newer interpretations of STROL show that English language learners, Native Americans, Latinos, and others also benefit from STROL. Of course, the term “beneficiary” may not be the best term given the fact that statistics show that many English teachers do not know about SRTOL; thus, who benefits from the document is questionable. What is not questionable is the fact that critics today are trying to find ways of making STROL relevant for today’s classroom. Whereas in the 1970s, the articles regarding SRTOL placed emphasis on the nontraditional college student, today the emphasis is also on the elementary and secondary school student who may not be black, who may be an immigrant, who may be poor, who may have an accent, et cetera. In other words, who SRTOL speaks for is changing.

## **Conclusion**

Although this chapter does not represent *all* that has been published regarding SRTOL, it does represent some of the major themes that critics have addressed. Moreover, the chapter serves as an examination of how critics responded to and interpreted SRTOL. By highlighting how critics have responded to SRTOL, I have also highlighted the “rituals of speaking” within the discussion of the document. As Alcoff states, “The rituals of speaking that involve the location of the speaker and listeners affect whether a claim is taken as a true, well-reasoned, compelling argument or a significant idea” (13). As you probably noticed in reading the history of SRTOL, critics not only spoke to the CCCC through the articles they submitted to

publications read by members of the CCCC, but they also indicated what they saw as “truths” and “falsehoods” within SRTOL.

Additionally, I have used this chapter to show how critics engage in speaking on behalf of others. I noted the way in which we can see Spivak’s and Alcoff’s concepts of speaking on behalf of others within the publications on SRTOL. What I have not done, but what I will do in the next three chapters, is show how speaking on behalf of others can be seen from the context of the rhetorical situation.

As I noted in the introduction, Bitzer’s rhetorical situation plays a prominent role in this study. As such, I will begin the next chapter by introducing Bitzer’s rhetorical situation and discuss how a speaker’s social location affects the way a speaker presents the exigences within a text. I will pay close attention to how the CCCC envisions its own social location (or identity) within the academy and among its members and theorize the impact that this social location had on how the CCCC presented the exigencies within SRTOL. Most importantly, I will identify how the CCCC speaks on behalf of others as it discusses the exigences within SRTOL. By doing this, I hope to give a rhetorical context of how speaking on behalf of others is done with SRTOL.



### Chapter Three: The Rhetoric of Speaking on Behalf of Others: The Exigencies

While Alcoff's and Spivak's theories on speaking for and about others are valuable, what they do not focus on is the rhetorical urgency some people have to engage in this practice. Both, for example, highlight how those who have power speak on behalf of those who don't and what that means for those who cannot speak. Additionally, they focus on individuals who speak on behalf of others, not organizations that do so. This complicates the discussion considerably because an organization is a collective unit made up of individuals who may or may not agree with all of the goals of the organization. Further complicating the discussion is that the audiences (invoked, or imagined, or addressed) may not necessarily take into consideration individual disagreement and therefore assume that everyone has the same point of view. This, of course, is what makes the discussion of how the CCCC speaks on behalf of others through SRTOL so complex.

What I want to do is highlight a rhetorical theory that emphasizes how speaker, subject, and audience combine to produce a situation in which the rhetor feels *compelled* to speak on behalf of others, not only because he or she has the power to, but also because he or she wants the audience to effect a needed change in a situation. I argue that Bitzer's rhetorical situation can help readers understand not only how rhetors engage in speaking on behalf of others, but also how it is that audiences accept the rhetors' role in speaking on behalf of others. Despite the criticism Bitzer's theory has received for over forty years, Bitzer does provides us with a sophisticated model of the rhetorical situation, one that elaborates its three salient features--- exigence, audience, and constraints. Of these, he observes that a rhetorical exigence has the power to move or prompt the rhetor to take verbal action in order to address an urgent crisis or

problem. What Bitzer does not do is acknowledge that in taking action, the rhetor may be, and often is, compelled to speak on behalf of others.

Instead the rhetorical situation, as explained by Bitzer, is used to help people visualize “the nature of those contexts in which speakers or writers create rhetorical discourse” (“Rhetorical” 1). Unfortunately, Bitzer and other commentators of the rhetorical situation have not explicitly discussed the way in which rhetorical discourse is used to speak on behalf of others in a given rhetorical situation. Since the creation of STROL occurs within a rhetorical discourse and writers both for and against seem to have a shared understanding of issues which influenced the creation of SRTOL (namely the integration of AAEV speakers in predominately schools and new theoretical understandings of the legitimacy of nonstandard English dialects), the rhetorical situation seems to be the best way to understand the motivations rhetors have to speak on behalf of others and how audiences respond to this actuality.

Bitzer defines rhetoric as “a mode of altering reality, not by direct application of energy to objects, but by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action” (“Rhetorical” 3). For the committee who created SRTOL, the resolution and the background statement act as means of challenging the belief (or the “reality”) that teachers and school systems should be responsible for delegitimizing dialects other than standard English. To Bitzer, rhetorical discourse does not come out of the blue; rather it comes because of a situation that the rhetor feels compelled to respond to. In fact, he emphasizes that rhetorical discourse “comes into existence because of some specific condition or situation which invites utterance” (“Rhetorical” 4). The condition or situation is “objective, publicly observable, and historic” (“Rhetorical” 11).

The idea that the rhetorical situation is objective has been rebuked by several critics, namely Richard E. Vatz and Scott Consigny. Vatz, for example, believes that the rhetor perceives and interprets the rhetorical situation; because of this, the rhetor has the power to determine the meaning of the exigence (156-57). To Vatz, “utterance strongly invites exigence” (159): that is, how one discusses the situation determines how one constructs the exigence within the situation. Though Consigny disagrees with Vatz’s belief that “the rhetor [is] completely free to create his own exigencies at will” (178), he also disagrees with the simplicity of Bitzer’s belief that a rhetor within a given rhetorical situation is working within a “determinate context.” Consigny believes that a rhetor works within an “indeterminate context” that allows him or her to interrogate the situation and “to formulate or *discover* relevant possible problems in an indeterminate situation” (177).

In this chapter, I will explore the identity of the CCCC and how that identity related to how it approached the discussion of the exigencies SRTOL addressed. Throughout chapter two, I noted how several critics discussed the exigencies that the CCCC explored in SRTOL. These included the existence of linguistic discrimination, the lack of linguistic training for teachers of English; and the theories regarding the teaching of students who speak and write in dialects other than standard English. Because critics *saw* the exigencies, they seem to exemplify Bitzer’s belief that the rhetorical situation is objective.

### **Understanding a Situated Discourse**

In a rhetorical situation, an utterance occurs because an exigence exists and needs to be modified through discourse; to repeat, Bitzer defines exigence as “an imperfection marked by urgency; it is a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done, a thing which is other than it

should be” (“Rhetorical” 6). In other words, the exigence is a problem that the rhetor wants to address with the audience so it can assist in the “positive modification” of the exigence. The exigence, Bitzer goes on to say, “functions as the organizing principle: it specifies the audience to be addressed and the change to be effected” (“Rhetorical” 6-7). As an example of an exigence, Bitzer points to pollution. A rhetor is motivated to address pollution as an exigence and encourages the rhetorical audience to do what it can to reduce pollution. The rhetorical audience, Bitzer emphasizes, is comprised of people who “influenced by discourse” can serve as “mediators of change” (“Rhetorical” 7). In this situation, the rhetorical audience can be government agencies and/or environmental groups that can establish and promote policies to reduce pollution.

Within the rhetorical situation is the constraint, which, as Bitzer explains, can be made up of “persons, events, objects, and relations,” any of which can “constrain action needed to modify the exigence” (“Rhetorical” 8). In the aforementioned example of a rhetor encouraging the reduction of pollution, the rhetor may find that a lobbyist for pollution-producing factories can serve as a constraint, especially if the lobbyist is able to convince government agencies that pollution from factories is not a major problem. But then again, if pollution-producing factories have a bad reputation among various groups, the rhetor can use this constraint to his or her advantage. The rhetor can encourage the rhetorical audience not to support the factories. Likewise, the constraint can come from outside the rhetor and within the rhetor. For example, if the rhetorical audience doesn’t trust the rhetor or finds his or her argument illogical, the rhetor himself or herself becomes a negative constraint. However, if the rhetor has a good reputation and is able to connect with the rhetorical audience, the rhetor reputation becomes a positive constraint.

In sum, when we think about the rhetorical situation that influenced the production of SRTOL, we need to think about three interrelated components: the exigencies, which serve as the unifying components of the situation; the rhetorical audience, which has the ability to hear and react to discourse; and the constraints, which can prevent or help the rhetorical audience from affecting change (Bitzer, “Rhetorical” 7-8). Additionally, we need to remind ourselves that the rhetorical situation is a responsive situation. The rhetor responds to the exigence and the rhetorical audience responds to the rhetor and his or discussion of the exigence. Thus, the rhetorical situation involves responsibility. Spivak describes responsibility like this:

I can formalize responsibility in the following way: It is that all action is undertaken in response to a call (or something that seems to us to resemble a call) that cannot be grasped as such. Response here involves not only “respond to,” as in “*give* an answer to,” but also the related situations of “answering to,” as in being responsible for a name (this brings the question of the relationship between being responsible for/to ourselves and for/to others). (“Responsibility” 22)

If we look at the rhetorical situation from the perspective of responsibility, it is possible to interpret the exigence as the implicit “call” the rhetor responds to and articulates to the rhetorical audience. The exigence thus serves as a means of “answering to” the group of people being spoken about and spoken for, as well as answering to the rhetorical audience (which may or may not be the same people). But since the rhetorical audience must respond to the exigence, it is important for the rhetor to “give an answer to” the problem. The rhetor is literally the one who bears the responsibility for initiating and encouraging communication (whether verbal or nonverbal) within the rhetorical situation.

Additionally, we need to think about how the exigencies affected the way in which the CCCC engaged in speaking on behalf of others. What I argue here is that the CCCC spoke on behalf of teachers and students not only because it presumed it had the power to do so, but also because the exigencies served as motivation for it to do so. Using SRTOL as a mechanism for speaking on behalf of others, the CCCC could show teachers, universities, and public school systems that there was a united front in how to address the exigencies bearing upon the production of this document.

### **Identity and Representation**

To understand the exigencies which bore upon the rhetorical situation encompassing SRTOL, it will be helpful to understand the speaker (or rhetor) position as a function performed by two professional organizations, the CCCC, and its parent group, NCTE. Both organizations are educational in that they promote and provide teacher training opportunities to teachers of English. Yet both organizations are distinct in that they have their own conferences, committees, goals, and, most importantly, cultures. The CCCC serves primarily college professors; NCTE serves teachers from kindergarten through college. The CCCC serves those in the field of Rhetoric and Composition; NCTE serves those in the fields of literature and Rhetoric and Composition. While both organizations have overlapping goals, both organizations have distinct goals that reflect the distinct needs of the constituents they serve.

In sum, each organization has its own identity and their identities center upon the identities of the people who make up the organization. Thus, it is important to understand the identity of the speaker or rhetor so that readers can understand how a rhetor discusses the exigence (and addresses the rhetorical audience and constraints). Because this project focuses on

education, I believe it is important to briefly look at how the concept of educational identity, especially as it relates the identity of the organization that created SRTOL.

James Paul Gee's article, "Identity as an Analytic Lens for Research in Education" does a good job of discussing the complexity of identity within educational contexts. He defines "identity" as being "a certain 'kind of person.' . . . [All] people have multiple identities connected not to their 'internal states' but to their performances in society" (99). In other words, a person's identity is primarily social and is not fixed. For example, I am an African American female lecturer at a large Midwestern university. Students may see my gender and assume that because I am female I am supposed to be "nice" and perhaps "maternal." I, on the other hand, do not believe that college teachers should be maternal, and I, in fact, see myself as strict. Strictness, I perceive, is a trait many college professors have. After all, many college professors at the Midwestern university where I teach have attendance policies; performance expectations of students; rules regarding proper research and formatting of papers, and the like. Additionally, I am also a product of a historically black college in which many African American students expect their teachers to be "mean," i.e., "rigorous." (See Lisa Delpit's *Other People's Children* on African American expectations of teachers.) The university where I teach also has expectations of teachers that are different from students. The university expects teachers to serve on committees, contribute to the community, and be accountable to the department, division, school, college, et cetera. Thus, readers can see the intersectionality of identity and how that intersectionality is influenced not just by my own perception of identity but by the perception other people have of how I should act.<sup>19</sup> In fact, Gee suggests we view identity from four distinct and interrelating perspectives: 1) nature identity; 2) institutional identity; 3) discourse identity; and 4) affinity identity.

For the purposes of this chapter, I want to focus on institutional identity and affinity identity. Institutional identity (I-Identity) is determined by a person's "position" within a particular institution. Thus, a professor's identity is determined by the "authorities" within the higher institution where he or she works (Gee 102-03). The affinity perspective identity (A-Identity) comes about when a group of people share a special devotion "to a set of common endeavors or practices and secondarily to other people in terms of shared culture or traits" (Gee 105). These individuals form an identity group, which can be institutionalized (e.g. support groups) or non-institutionalized (e.g. Internet followers) (Gee 106).

Although Gee discusses I-Identity in regards to individuals, we can discuss I-Identity in regards to CCCC as an organization and examine its positionality in relationship to the academy in general and the field of English in particular. As mentioned earlier, the CCCC is an organization consisting primarily of college English teachers who specialize in Rhetoric and Composition (and sometimes Communication Studies). The CCCC is part of NCTE which is the advocacy organization for English teachers who serve in any educational capacity. This, of course, is important for it brings up the issue as to whom the document should be attributed—the CCCC, which created the committee to formulate the document, or NCTE, the umbrella organization of which the CCCC is a part. Related to the issue of authorship is the issue of which organization is speaking on behalf of its members—NCTE or CCCC? For the purposes of this dissertation, the CCCC will be named as the author, and the primary advocate for SRTOL. In my earlier discussion of Spivak, I mentioned that Spivak discusses two forms of representation. The first form of representation refers to advocacy and representation; thus, the CCCC speaks for and represents English teachers and Composition Studies. The second form refers to re-presentation, which, in this instance, means how the CCCC attempts to re-present (or portray) the English



teacher. When engaging in re-presentation, the CCCC speaks often and extensively about the English teacher.

In fact, a cursory examination of the CCCC's Web site indicates that it calls itself "the world's largest professional organization for researching and teaching composition, from writing to new media." Additionally, the organization states what it considers to be its main goals:

CCCC supports and promotes the teaching and study of college composition and communication by 1) sponsoring meetings and publishing scholarly materials for the exchange of knowledge about composition, composition pedagogy, and rhetoric; 2) supporting a wide range of research on composition, communication, and rhetoric; 3) working to enhance the conditions for learning and teaching college composition and to promote professional development; and 4) acting as an advocate for language and literacy education nationally and internationally.

As an organization that seeks to both "promote professional development" and serve as "an advocate for language and literacy education nationally and internationally," it makes itself responsible for speaking on behalf of English teachers and the field of Rhetoric and Composition. In fact, by assuming this responsibility, it forges an institutional identity (I-Identity) (within the field of Rhetoric and Composition and English Studies) centered on advocacy. Just as a professor's I-Identity is determined by the officials in the university where he or she works, the I-Identity of CCCC is determined by those in the field of Rhetoric and Composition. The academy (that nebulous term to mean those in higher education) recognizes the legitimacy of the field of Rhetoric and Composition, and those within in the academy who are in the field of Rhetoric and Composition recognize the importance and legitimacy of the CCCC. Discussing the identity of Composition and the CCCC, William F. Imscher declared in

1987, “Composition has established an identity of its own, not solely as a practitioner’s art, but as a subject for scholarly study. The burgeoning membership of the Conference on College Composition and Communication testifies to wide professional interest. *The organization has done more to advance composition studies than any other*” (81 italics mine). The fact that the organization’s institutional description calls for the advancement of the field of Rhetoric and Composition further illuminates its role in institutionalizing Rhetoric and Composition within higher education and within the public sphere.

In addition to its I-Identity, the CCCC has within its organization various interests groups that represent A-Identities, or affinity groups. For example, it has specific caucuses that address various issues related to African American, Asian, Latino, Native American, and LGBTQ communities. It also has special interests groups related to writing centers, writing-across-the-curriculum, transnational composition, service learning, basic writing, and more. While these affinity identities can help create a sense of community for individuals within a large and complex organization, they can also create chasms, especially when groups feel like that they have competing interests and must vie for attention within the larger organization. Furthermore, the voice of the organization can be dominated by one or more of these affinity groups, thus making the organization susceptible to accusations that it does not speak for all members.

An organization with various affinity identities can thrive if affinity groups feel like they can not only adhere to the goals of the organization but also contribute to carrying out or even establishing goals. One of the ways in which the CCCC carries out its goals and promotes issues that are important within affinity groups is through its official journal, *College Composition and Communication* (CCC). CCC came into being one year after the formation of the organization in 1949. According to Phillips, Greenburg, and Gibson, CCC initially published articles ranging

from teaching techniques to reading materials in a composition class. During the 1950s, several issues were devoted to articles on the importance of knowing linguistics in order to teach writing; by the 1960s and 1970s, articles about social issues that emphasized the teaching of minority and “remedial” students, democratization of the English classroom, the emerging discipline of Rhetoric and Composition, and, of course, “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” took center stage (454-57). By encouraging writers in the field of Rhetoric and Composition to publish articles in *CCC*, the CCCC gave teachers a forum in which to debate and present issues that were important to them.

Like most academic journals, *CCC* is not geared towards the general public. Rather, it is geared towards the practitioners in the field. Like other academic journals, *CCC* has a technical lexicon and style that people in the field of Rhetoric and Composition use and understand. As Eugene A. Nida asserts, technical language (like those found in academic journals) “serve as a system of social solidarity and a sign of belonging” (478). For an organization like the CCCC, the journal not only serves as a means for publishing articles that are of interest to its affinity groups, it also serves as a means of establishing its institutional identity, since the journal is linked to the organization. Because the CCCC is an academic organization and the *CCC* is the official publication of the academic organization, it serves as a means of helping the larger academic community understand the various issues within the field of Rhetoric and Composition. Thus, the CCCC has an I-Identity within the field of Rhetoric and Composition and within the academy, but it also has an A-Identity within the larger academic community, since it is an institutionalized affinity group.

Although the CCCC is an academic organization, it does provide information on its Web site for those in the public who may be interested in learning more about the organization. Of

course, any public can be nested within larger publics. In this context, the public can consist of academics outside of CCCC (such as members of Rhetoric Society of America or Linguistic Society of America) who relate to the organization's concerns; or the public can consist of people outside of academia (such as reporters, government officials, or parents) who are interested in the organization's stances on various issues. Because the CCCC makes clear in its mission statement that it represents and advocates for English teachers within the field of Rhetoric and Composition, the public(s) may also (subconsciously) assume that English teachers agree with the stands that the CCCC takes, much in the same way the public(s) may (subconsciously) assume that an elected official advocates and represents the views of the majority of people who voted for him or her. What the public(s) may not necessarily understand is that the CCCC, in its creation of position statements and resolutions, can also engage in the re-presentation of the English teacher. In other words, it can redefine what the roles and responsibilities of the English teacher are to its members and to those outside of the organization.

### **Identity and Re-presentation**

When the CCCC engages in the representation and re-presentation of the English teacher, it does so through individuals who help establish the I-Identity of the organization. To fully understand I-Identity of CCCC at the time of SRTOL, readers also need to understand what influenced the members of the organization who created the document and why supporters agreed with the document. According to Lawrence Freeman, members of the CCCC, especially those who created SRTOL, were influenced greatly by fields outside of English such as sociology and psychology (Freeman 25). Geneva Smitherman further asserts that members were influenced by the "social protest" and "street activism" taking place during the Civil Rights

movement of the 1960s. Thus, according to Smitherman's re-presentation, CCCC members, like others in the academy, wanted to seek (language) rights, not merely discuss (language) rights ("Retrospective" 21). Stephen Parks goes one step further and identifies various groups including the Black Panthers and New University Conference which advocated for the legitimacy of Black English (the precursor term for African American English Vernacular) as being influential to the committee that created SRTOL (17-18). Moreover, if readers examine the book *The Hope and the Legacy*, the editors make clear that issues of bidialectalism and Black English were prevalent among those in education and thus may have influenced the committee to want to address how teachers should work with students who do not speak or write standard English (Bruch and Marback xiv). Therefore, it was not surprising that scholar Elizabeth Fitts defined supporters of SRTOL as being a part of the "socio-politico-linguistic camp" (6) or affinity group within the CCCC.

Geneva Smitherman, who served on the committee that oversaw the creation of STROL, refers to the committee (and the supporters) of the document as "progressives" ("Retrospective" 24). While she acknowledges that others who served on the committee had ideologies that could be considered "radical," "moderate," and "conservative," the overriding belief, at least by critics such as Donald Lazere and Stephen Parks, was that supporters of the document were (and are) liberal. Stephen Parks, in fact, refers to avowedly political organizations (such as New University Conference, Black Panther Party, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and Students for a Democratic Society) that influenced the formation of SRTOL as being "leftists." For Parks, leftists are most concerned with not only helping the working class obtain affordable housing, decent employment and a good education, but also concerned with critiquing the political, sociological, and economic forces that prevent the working class from obtaining any real

socioeconomic and political power (7-9). Furthermore, Lazere refers to people who championed SRTOL and Freirean critical literacy as “leftist educational theorists” (7).

By relating the CCCC and supporters of SRTOL to political progressives, leftists, and the like, writers essentially re-present the CCCC as a progressive organization committed to not only teaching students but influencing the way society relates to the students and the teachers who teach them. In this respect, CCCC as a whole assumes an affinity identity (within the larger academic community) that is predominately constructed by those concerned with language and political rights. As Bruch and Marback contend in “Race Identity, Writing, and the Politics of Dignity,” it is important for researchers to examine SRTOL and Rhetoric and Composition’s “dilemmas of language, race identity, education, and justice in terms of racial inequality and injustice in the broader society.” Keith Gilyard believes that is important to “check in on those working in the spirit of this groundbreaking document [SRTOL], those ‘holdin’ it down,’ which really means lifting up their practice to secure gains in thinking about teaching and linguistic diversity” (“Holdin’” 115). Thus, readers may interpret the CCCC as an organization committed to fighting injustice not just in the classroom, but also in the overall society. Supporters of the document seek to “secure gains” for language rights and diversity. And James Sledd, while acknowledging that the CCCC had people who wanted to rescind the document, also says: “Radical teachers and progressive caucuses no doubt do what they can to keep the vision and the hope alive, but if working within the System to right the System’s wrongs ends constantly in failure, why should one not say, ‘Smash it all!’” (675). Thus, CCCC supporters believe SRTOL helped institutionalize the CCCC as an organization consisting of people who sought to right a wrong within a System that perpetuates inequality.

By understanding the identity of an organization such as the CCCC and the informal affinity groups within it, we can better understand how organizations approach various issues. In the case of the CCCC, we can see that there had been an informal affinity group of members who coalesced around educational issues, especially issues related to language. This affinity group was active within the organization and influenced the organization to eventually create and support SRTOL. Most importantly, this affinity group helped re-present the CCCC, so that those outside of Rhetoric and Composition might interpret the CCCC as an activist organization, not just an educational one.

### **Genre and Exigence**

Just as human beings and organizations have an identity, so, too, do texts. Many readers identify a text by the genre and the author. The genre of a text helps readers understand not only the purpose of the text, but also how they should understand the text (Devitt 12). For example, if I read a children's book, I understand that the book will most likely look a certain way; that is, the book will probably have pictures, large font, perhaps a rhyme scheme, and other generic conventions that would identify it as a children's book. Likewise, I may also assume that the children's book is designed to teach a larger lesson about life. For example, the residents of Whoville in *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* understand that Christmas is not about materialism; rather it is about community. If I know that the children's author is Dr. Seuss, I can expect (perhaps rightly or wrongly) that the book may not feature a multiracial town or focus on issues related to socioeconomic class.

Not all texts, however, are easily identifiable by author and genre. Both Sledd and Smitherman have pointed out that readers of SRTOL assume that NCTE is the author of the text

(Sledd 667; Smitherman, “Historical” 35); this mistake, (most likely the result of people not understanding the organizational distinction between NCTE and CCCC), does not take into consideration the unique cultures of both NCTE and CCCC and how these cultures contributed to the different approaches each organization used to address language issues. In addition to the confusion that exists regarding the authorship of the document, there is some confusion regarding the genre of the resolution, especially as it relates to SRTOL. On the one hand, readers of the Fall 1974 issue of the *CCC* can read a note from CCCC Chairperson Richard Lawson asserting that in 1971 CCCC officers sought to create a “position statement on students’ dialects.” On the other hand, readers can see how Lawson refers to the SRTOL as a “resolution and background statement”; within the document, the CCCC refers to SRTOL as a resolution on at least four occasions. Thus, it is important to understand the way in which the CCCC interprets the differences between a resolution and a position statement.

### *What is a Resolution?*

To understand the purpose of a resolution, we need to first understand how a resolution is defined. *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term as “The action or an act of finding the answer to a question, the solution to a problem, etc.; the elimination or easing of doubt. Also: the fact of such an answer, solution, etc., having been found” (“Resolution,” def. 14a). Though this definition does not have the term *exigence* in it, the definition reflects the sense of urgency that the term *exigence* connotes. Bitzer says that an exigence is “something waiting to be done” (“Rhetorical” 6). Much like the definition of a resolution, the exigence is the problem that awaits a solution; the exigence, like the resolution, is the reason why someone seeks to find a solution to a problem. If readers recall, the CCCC makes clear that SRTOL is designed to address the



question of how teachers can help students who speak and write in dialects other than standard English. The document not only suggests that teachers receive training in language and linguistics, but also encourages teachers to examine the negative assumptions they and society have about students who speak in dialects. It provides information on how certain dialects are privileged over others and gives suggestions as to how teachers can work with students who have stigmatized dialects.

Besides the definition already discussed, the *Oxford English Dictionary* provides one additional definition of resolution: “A formal decision, determination, or expression of opinion by a deliberative assembly, committee, court, public meeting, etc. (in early use also by individual)” (“Resolution,” def. 15a). Thus, the definition of resolution not only encompasses the solution to a problem, but also encompasses an organization of individuals who express an opinion as one body. In this second definition, a resolution is, in general, a rhetorical act designed to speak on behalf of the organization and its members.

Though not all resolutions are passed unanimously, most resolutions are written to convey a consensus opinion within an organization. Thus, resolutions will normally have the words “we” and/or “our” to express the organization’s sense of solidarity. Resolutions such as SRTOL are designed to address beliefs and concerns of an organization. Today, most resolutions provide information regarding a problem and then give one or more declarative statements as to how the problem should be resolved. Some resolutions are written using the “Whereas”/ “Be It Resolved” clauses which help readers see the clear distinction made between the problems and the solutions or actions that are to take place. Thus, the genre of the resolution seems to be one of advocacy or Spivak’s notion of representation. The organization discusses the problem(s) or exigence and then provides a means for finding a solution to it.

SRTOL is not set up as a conventionally formal resolution (which one would see today) because it is not structured on the “Whereas” and “Be It Resolved” clausal pairings, and therefore, it seemingly rejects the genre expectations of the resolutions. David Russell reminds readers that “genre” can be defined as “the ongoing use of certain material tools (marks, in the case of written genres) in certain ways that worked once and might work again, a typified tool-mediated response to conditions recognized by participants as recurring.” In other words, genres such as resolutions use certain phrases and formats to alert readers of how they are to respond to and use the tool (such as the resolution).

If CCCC expected its members to read the resolution and discover a “solution to a problem” or an “elimination or easing of doubt,” it had a rude awakening. Some members felt that the resolution did not solve the problem of how to work with students who had stigmatized dialects. Moreover, the controversy regarding the document epitomizes how members of the organization as a whole did not agree with the “expression of opinion” of the CCCC.

Significantly, perhaps, the NCTE did not seem to agree with the CCCC’s SRTOL statement. Rather than initially support SRTOL, NCTE created its own—and in the words of Smitherman—“weaker version” of SRTOL, which NCTE passed in 1974 (“Retrospective” 22). Ironically, NCTE’s version of SRTOL looks more like a traditional resolution. The NCTE document has two sections—the “Background section,” which highlights the problem, and the “Resolution” Section, which highlights the solution. The “Background” section has one main sentence followed by the “Be it therefore” clause. It looks like this:

Members of NCTE and its constituent group, the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), became concerned in the early 1970s about a tendency in American society to categorize nonstandard dialects as

corrupt, inferior, or distorted forms of standard English, rather than as distinct linguistic systems, and the prejudicial labeling of students that resulted from this view. Be it therefore

The “Resolution” section begins with the sentence: “Resolved, that the National Council for the Teachers of English affirm the students’ right to their own language—to the dialect that expresses their family and community identity, the idiolect that expresses their unique personal identity.” Afterward the NCTE lists three affirmations; within the “Resolution section” is a solution section that contains the phrase, “Be it further Resolved, that, to this end,” and it lists two goals the NCTE wishes to accomplish.

To understand why there are two different versions of SRTOL, we need to consider the organizational culture of both groups. From my interpretation of Stephen Parks’ work and Geneva Smitherman’s articles, both writers imply that though NCTE is a progressive organization, it is more conservative (and less radical) than the CCCC. We can see this in the 1971 (unpublished, though circulated among the CCCC Executive Committee) NCTE Commission on Language “Concerning the Teaching of Usage” report.<sup>20</sup> (This report is also referred to as the “Statement on Usage.”)

This seven page long report is a precursor to SRTOL. The purpose of the report is to discuss the issues related to the teaching of standard English usage. The Commission on Language spends a considerable amount of time discussing what standard (American) English is, who uses it, the differences between formal and informal standard English, and the need for students who have not mastered standard English to acquire it. Likewise, it also mentions the importance of dialects to communities and the need for teachers to respect dialects. However, it seems that the purpose of the document is not to affirm students’ right to their own language, but

to affirm the complexity of the English language in regards to usage. It calls for NCTE to make the public aware “that the problem of standards of usage is not a simple one. It is one that demands of every user of the language greater alertness of observation and sensitivity of judgment” (7).

Parks writes that at a CCCC officers meeting held March 5, 1972, it was noted that several officers disagreed with numerous sections within the Commission on Language report and recommended against promoting and publishing the report. Though the CCCC officers accepted the Commission on Language’s ideas regarding the importance of teachers understanding linguistics and the history of the English language, the subcommittee reviewing the report did not wish to “[endorse] the [Committee on Language’s] argument about standard English nor its vision of how standard English should be used to supply students to the U.S. economy” (162).

Although this report was discussed more in depth at the officers’ meeting in 1972, it had been mentioned earlier at a CCCC Executive Committee meeting in 1971; at the 1971 meeting, the Executive Committee decided to “make another effort at a statement affirming the student’s right to his own language”; after this decision, one member told the Committee that the NCTE Commission on Language “had issued a very mild statement” (Secretary’s Report No. 65 322). The use of the phrase, “a very mild statement” could mean that NCTE did, indeed, put out a statement commenting on students’ right to their own language and it was the statement that the CCCC needed to consider. Or, according to Stephen Parks, it more likely meant that NCTE was too scared or too conservative to compose a more forceful document. Parks notes that “from the outset,” the CCCC endeavored to create a stronger position on the issue and “saw itself principally opposed to the NCTE’s previous statement” (161).

The CCCC, however, explicitly supported the concept of students' right to their own language; unlike the Commission on Language's report, which focused primarily on the function of the English language, the CCCC seemed to want to focus more on students and their relationship with language. SRTOL, thus, served as an implicit response to the Commission on Language report. Like the Commission on Language report, SRTOL was written more like a report and less like a resolution.

In fact, if readers compare CCCC resolutions written during the 1970s (and today), readers will see that SRTOL looks nothing like the typical CCCC resolution. For instance, included in "Secretary's Report No. 66" were several resolutions discussed during the Executive Committee and CCCC Business meeting in 1972. Two of the resolutions had the "Whereas" clause and ended with the "Be It Resolved" clause; one resolution began with the clause, "Resolved," which was used twice; and another included a one sentence background statement and concluded with the phrase, "Resolved." Though the resolutions had slight variations, they consistently used the phrase "resolved" to indicate an attempt to solve—or at least address—an exigence (327-28).

Unlike the CCCC's SRTOL, if readers examine the NCTE's version of SRTOL, readers see how NCTE conforms to the traditional resolution by explicitly highlighting out what it seeks to resolve:

that NCTE make available to other professional organizations this resolution as well as suggestions for ways of dealing with linguistic variety, as expressed in the CCCC *background statement* on students' right to their own language; and

that NCTE promote classroom practices to expose students to the variety of dialects that comprise or multiregional, multiethnic, and multicultural society, so that they too will understand the nature of American English and come to respect all dialects. (*italics mine*)

Notice that the NCTE resolution endorses the SRTOL background statement, but not the actual resolution itself. According to Geneva Smitherman, this was not surprising, for NCTE had a history of supporting prescriptive language policies and ridiculing dialects (“CCCC” 372). Though NCTE, throughout the mid and late twentieth century, modified its stances on dialects and prescriptive usage, Smitherman seems to imply, and Keith Gilyard seems to agree, that NCTE was a more centrist organization than the CCCC (Gilyard, “Getting” 543). In fact, during the process of creating SRTOL, CCCC members lobbied NCTE to adopt the CCCC’s version of SRTOL. Smitherman describes the negotiation process as this: “The struggle waged by CCCC leaders and members to get NCTE support for the [SRTOL] resolution was acrimonious and fierce—in-yo-face” (“CCCC” 371). In the end, NCTE settled for another resolution, which was written in the conventional style of a resolution.

### *What is a Position Statement?*

SRTOL is referred throughout the document and in many articles as a resolution; however, the CCCC, on its Web site, calls SRTOL a position statement. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a position statement is “a statement setting out the considered position or policy of an organization, group, etc., with respect to a particular matter” (“Position Statement,” def.) Like the resolution, the position statement is written as if all members agree with the “position or policy” of the organization. If readers go to the CCCC Web site and click “Find a

Position Statement,” they will see a section on creating a position statement. Here is how CCCC describes a position statement:

Characteristically, a position statement is a short summary of what is currently known about an issue and the organizational beliefs about that issue. Generally, in addition, the statements include the history and background of the issue, the exigency for the statement, supporting information, and a short reference list. Statements also often include implied suggestions for putting recommendations to practice.

Notice that its description includes the phrase, “the organizational beliefs about that issue.” This phrase implies that members within the organization share a similar way of thinking regarding a specific issue. Like the resolution, which emphasizes the discussion of the problem, the position statement requests a discussion of the problem or “exigency” as the CCCC calls it. Notice, too, that the CCCC indicates that position statements “often include implied suggestions for putting recommendations to practice.” This sentence is fascinating because it indicates that the position statement, unlike the resolution which calls for an explicit call for action, only needs to have “implied suggestions or recommendations”; thus, a position statement does not have an audience modify the exigence. Moreover, this sentence points to the conventional understanding that a position statement does not have to lay out a problem and a solution; it merely has to state a claim. Additionally, if we examine SRTOL in its entirety, we see that the document includes a background narrative on the issue and supporting references. While SRTOL does offer “suggestions for sounder, alternate approaches [to teaching],” (711), the Committee also makes clear that SRTOL is not designed to be a “teaching guide” (711). Yet, as was seen in the previous

chapter and as I will show in subsequent chapters, many critics responded to SRTOL as if it were a resolution designed to solve a problem.

On the surface, CCCC seems to indicate that resolutions and position statements can serve similar purposes. They, in fact, highlight a particular stance the organization holds. In this respect, they may be seen as variants of (what I like to call) the organizational stance genre.<sup>21</sup> The main difference between the two genres seems to be how the genre is shaped and who gets to shape the genre. According to the CCCC Web site, position statements, such as SRTOL, originate within the CCCC Executive Committee; resolutions originate within the larger membership of the CCCC. Though some people may say that the words of the document are more important than the genre itself, we need to remember that genres help readers understand how to interpret the document (Devitt 21). If the CCCC wants its members and the public to understand particular exigencies, it needs to use a genre or genres that can highlight the exigencies. Certainly, the resolution and the position statement do just that; if the CCCC wants its members to modify the exigencies, then it needs to use a genre that will help the audience see that it is to modify the exigence. The question is which genre does that?

### *Exigencies and Genre*

To me, the exigencies within a document such as SRTOL serve as controlling ideas. As Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi point out, “The controlling idea controls the paper [document], working within a particular genre to help the writer determine what content is relevant and needed and how that content should be organized” (73). The fact that Bitzer claims that the exigence serves as “the organizing principle” which “specifies the audience to be addressed and the change to be effected” (“Rhetorical” 7) helps bear this point out. Like Carolyn R. Miller, I



believe that exigencies, thus, help writers understand the “rhetorical purpose” for composing a text (157), while helping readers understand the urgency of the text and what they must do to address the exigence. If one views an exigence from the perspective of Richard Vatz, in his piece “The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation,” then one might conclude that exigencies are not the objective phenomena that Bitzer seems to believe, but are creations of the rhetor (157).

Moreover, according to Vatz, rhetors may even create exigencies based on their understanding of a situation. For example, during the 1960s and early 1970s, African Americans who spoke and/or wrote in AAEV began entering predominately white college classrooms. Many teachers who encountered these students attempted to teach them standard English by discouraging students from writing in AAEV and penalizing students who exhibited AAEV in their writing. A rhetor could interpret this discouragement and penalty as forms of linguistic discrimination, which would be an exigence that needed to be addressed. Another rhetor could reinterpret the rhetorical situation and the exigence very differently. For that rhetor, the exigence could be the fact that the students entering the classroom had not mastered standard English and had to master it if they were to succeed in higher education and in the workforce. Thus, if we examine the discussion of the exigencies from Vatz’s perspective, it is possible to conclude that the CCCC used SRTOL as a means of interpreting the exigencies. In other words, the CCCC might have created SRTOL so that it could define, discuss, and advocate for language rights from a progressive perspective.

### **Exigencies in SRTOL**

In SRTOL, CCCC focuses on three main exigencies: linguistic discrimination; lack of linguistic training for teachers; and the pedagogical form of teachers who teach those who do not

speak or write in standard English. In this section I will examine the aforementioned exigencies and show how the CCCC addresses these exigencies by speaking on behalf of others.

*Exigency One: Linguistic Discrimination*

In the actual resolution, the CCCC speaks on behalf of “language scholars.” After the first line of the resolution, the CCCC writes, “Language scholars long ago denied the myth of a standard American dialect. The claim that any one dialect is unacceptable amounts to an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance of another” (710-11). Then the organization articulates what it thinks about linguistic domination. In doing so, it addresses the exigence of linguistic discrimination by showing that scholars who specialize in language do not believe in the oppression of people based on language.

Here, the CCCC speaks about what language scholars think; not surprisingly, some of the members on the Committee were language scholars (Smitherman and Chairperson Melvin Butler, among others) who thought the same way. However, there are multiple ways in which we can interpret for whom the CCCC speaks: one interpretation is that the CCCC is speaking on behalf of linguists. After all, linguists are language scholars who are very aware of the role that the acceptability of dialect plays in determining who considers a dialect valid or invalid. It is certainly possible (though not likely) that members of the organization may have envisioned all language scholars to be linguists. The second interpretation is that the CCCC is speaking on behalf of teachers. Since the CCCC is composed of college professionals interested in the teaching of writing and rhetoric, it would make sense that publics not affiliated with the CCCC could easily interpret “language scholars” to mean “teachers of writing.” After all, writing teachers are certainly interested in the way in which language is used within written and verbal

rhetoric. Wouldn't English teachers logically understand dialect since they themselves teach texts (such as *Huckleberry Finn*) which have dialect in them? And the third interpretation is that the organization is simply speaking on behalf of its members, whom readers might construe as language scholars, broadly understood.

After CCCC speaks on behalf of language experts, the organization then does something fascinating: instead of speaking solely on behalf of its members and teachers, it attempts to speak on behalf of Americans: "A nation proud of its diverse heritage and its culture and racial variety will preserve its heritage of dialect" (711). Here, the organization tells Americans: if you love your country and you love the diversity of the country, you *will not engage* in linguistic domination or discrimination against racial or cultural groups. In other words, the Committee is speaking on behalf of Americans and advocating to Americans not to engage in oppressive behavior.

This stance can be further seen in the background statement wherein the CCCC addresses linguistic discrimination: ". . . when speakers of a dialect of American English claim not to understand speakers of another dialect of the same language, the impediments are likely to be attitudinal" (712). In other words, when there is a communication problem, speakers need to be aware how much of their inability to understand each other is based not on dialect but rather on *attitudes about the dialect*. The CCCC continues: "The initial difficulties of perception can be overcome and should not be confused with those psychological barriers to communication which may be generated by racial, cultural, and social differences and attitudes" (712). Here the CCCC addresses the exigence and offers a reason why the exigence exists: speakers may have "racial, cultural, and social" attitudes that inhibit them from *wanting* to understand fellow speakers.

In this instance it is difficult to pinpoint for whom the CCCC is speaking on behalf. After all, the CCCC does not point to a specific group; rather the discussion on linguistic discrimination is presented in general terms. The organization does, however, speak on behalf of students when it discusses what motivates students to acquire or change dialects:

Dialect switching is complicated by many factors, not the least of which is the individual's own cultural heritage. Since dialect is not separate from culture, but an intrinsic part of it, accepting a new dialect means accepting a new culture; rejecting one's native dialect is to some extent a rejection of one's culture.

Therefore, the question of whether or not students *will* change their dialect involves their acceptance of a new—and possibly strange or hostile—set of culture values. Although many students *do* become bidialectical, and many *do* abandon their native dialects, those who don't switch may have any of a number of reasons, some of which may be beyond the school's right to interfere. (714)

Here the exigence regarding linguistic discrimination takes on a sense of urgency. Notice that the organization italicizes the words “will” and “do.” The italics indicate that the students, not the teachers or school systems, should make a choice on whether and how they should acquire a new dialect. Students can, for instance, want to accept a new culture. But also notice that CCCC speaks for students who do not wish to alter their dialect or accept the standard. At first, CCCC provides the reader with a possible explanation: the student does not want to accept a dialect from a culture that has traditionally been hostile to his or her culture. Additionally, CCCC infers that not only would they (the teachers and school administrators) never understand, but also that they (the teachers and school administrators) should not have a “right to interfere.” By teachers and school districts not interfering in a student's decision to not acquire a dialect, teachers and

school systems can lessen the probability that they themselves engage in linguistic discrimination or linguistic domination.

*Exigency Two: Lack of Linguistic Training for Teachers*

In the resolution, the CCCC speaks on behalf of the organization when it declares, “We affirm strongly that teachers must have the experiences and training that will enable them to respect diversity and uphold the right of students to their own language” (711). The CCCC uses the phrase, “We affirm strongly” to highlight the urgency that teachers must have “experiences and training” in understanding language and linguistics. In the background statement, the CCCC writes, “All English teachers should, as a minimum, know the principles of modern linguistics, and something about the history and nature of the English language in its social and cultural context” (723). The belief is that if teachers understand linguistics, they can understand better why students write and speak the way they do; additionally, teachers themselves can understand why certain dialects are more valued than others. The CCCC uses this as an example:

The planter’s daughter who asks in a pronounced drawl to be “carried” home from the dance is charming; the field hand who says “That’s shonuff a purty dress” becomes an object of amusement or scorn. The teacher who realizes that the difference is not in the superiority of either dialect, but in the connotation we supply, can avoid judging students’ dialects in social or economic terms. (724)

Here the CCCC shows that someone in a higher socioeconomic group is valued over the other who is from a lower socioeconomic (and racial) group. The belief is that once teachers understand what their own prejudices are, they will learn not to judge their students. In many respects, this example represents the CCCC speaking on behalf of the linguistically

marginalized. The CCCC shows how one dialect that is not the standard (notice the emphasis on the “pronounced drawl”) is still valued over the other dialect that is “scorned.”

In fact, when it comes to the discussion of teacher training, CCCC seems to speak about teachers as a means of speaking on behalf of them. Some examples include:

Teachers should be equally as willing to recognize that English can also increase the richness of its word stock by a free exchange among its dialects. If teachers had succeeded in preventing students from using such terms as “jazz,” “lariat,” and “kosher,” modern English would be poorer. (724)

Teachers should know that semantics is the study of how people give meaning to words and the way many of those meanings affect us emotionally rather than rationally. Teachers well grounded in modern semantics can help their students examine their word choices, not from the standpoint of right wrong, proper or improper, but by analyzing the impact possible choices will have on listeners or readers. (725)

Teachers need to ratify their book knowledge of language by living as minority speakers. They should be wholly immersed in a dialect group other than their own. (726)

The organization speaks on behalf of teachers by not only discussing what teachers know and do not know, but also what they need to know. In effect, the CCCC argues for a pedagogical enhancement of the teaching of English that includes not only the study of diction and semantics, but also the direct study and participation within the culture of the students whom they teach.

Notice some of the words used to indicate urgency: *should* as in “Teachers should know” and “Teachers should be willing”; and *need* as in “teachers need to.” These words, according to Robert Longacre, are characteristic of hortatory discourse, that is, discourse used by rhetors to “influence conduct,” from the audience (“Discourse” 109).

*Exigency Three:*

*Teaching Students Who Speak and Write in Dialects Other than Standard English*

In the very first paragraph of the background statement to SRTOL, the CCCC mentions the issues teachers face when trying to teach students who speak dialects other than standard English:

Differences in language have always existed, and the schools have always wrestled with them, but the social upheavals of the 1960’s, and the insistence of submerged minorities on a greater share in American society, have posed the question more insistently and have suggested the need for a shift in emphasis in providing answers. Should the schools try to uphold language variety, or to modify it, or to eradicate it? (709)

Notice that the CCCC mentions the exigence not just in the form of a rhetorical question, but also one that is posed *insistently*: “Should schools try to uphold language variety, or to modify it, or to eradicate it?” Some people might say that the answers to these questions depend on how people respond to the exigencies of linguistic discrimination and the lack of linguistic training for teachers. If people are opposed to linguistic domination and lack of linguistic training for teachers, then the answer is to uphold the language variety. To modify or eradicate a dialect would go against the claim in the SRTOL resolution: “The claim that any one dialect is

unacceptable amounts to an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another” (710-11).

To address this issue, the CCCC speaks on behalf of teachers. In one part of the background statement, the organization says, “We have also taught, many of us, as though the ‘English of the educated speakers,’ the language used by those in power in the community, had an inherent advantage over other dialects as a means of expressing thought or emotion, conveying information, or analyzing concepts” (710). Notice that not only does the organization write “we,” but it also writes, “many of us.” This is done to emphasize that the members of CCCC are also teachers and that “many” CCCC members have engaged in linguistic discrimination. Later on, the organization emphasizes that “many of us have taught as though the function of schools and colleges were to erase differences” (710). Again, the focus is on how the organization consists of teachers and how the organization can write about the relationship teachers have to how a school or college functions.

Thus, CCCC focuses on how teachers have traditionally been taught to address those who speak dialects other than standard English; have looked at those who speak dialects other than standard English as incapable of engaging in the collection, analysis, and critique of information, thought, or emotion; and have tried to “erase differences,” since that is the goal of education. Of course, there were some who took offense to this critique, and I will discuss those later in the dissertation. However, the point is that the CCCC chooses to address this exigence by speaking on behalf of English teachers. Despite the fact that it uses the word “many” to signify that not all English teachers have these experiences, it is easy for readers to overlook the word when they come across statements like this:



As English teachers, we are responsible for what our teaching does to the self-image and self-esteem of our students. We must decide what elements of our discipline are really important to us, whether we want to share with our students the richness of all varieties of language, and encourage linguistic virtuosity . . . (710).

If anything, this is a rallying cry by teachers for *all* teachers to reexamine their pedagogy in regards to language and how the promotion of one type of dialect might impact those who do not or choose not to learn it. Again, notice that CCCC uses certain words and phrases that indicate urgency: “we must”; “we want;” and “encourage.”

To address how teachers should teach students who speak in different dialects, the CCCC says in the first line of the resolution: “We affirm the students’ right to their own patterns and varieties of language—the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style” (710). In other words, we must accept students and the ways in which they speak. The “we,” however, can be confused for teachers, as opposed to the organization itself. In *Everything’s a Text: Readings for Composition*, the editors introduce the resolution by emphasizing that the CCCC is “made up of thousands of composition and communication teachers” (79). Additionally, they quote Richard Larson who writes that “‘dedicated members of the CCCC’ worked for years ‘toward a position statement on a major problem confronting teachers of composition and communication: how to respond to the variety in their students’ dialects” (qtd. in Melzer and Coxwell-Teague 79). By emphasizing that CCCC is comprised of teachers and ignoring the controversy regarding the resolution, the editors of the book make it sound as if teachers wrote it (they did) and all teachers approved of it (they did not).

After encouraging teachers affirm or approve of the student dialect, the CCCC encourages teachers to understand American English. In the section on grammar handbooks, the organization writes, “We know that American English is pluralistic. We know that our students can and do function in a growing multiplicity of language situations which require different dialects, changing interconnections of dialects, and dynamic uses of language” (718). The “we” is designed to affirm what should be considered a common fact between the audience of teachers and authors of the text. Here, the organization speaks on behalf of teachers by simultaneously speaking to teachers. Additionally it subtly reemphasizes the need for teachers to understand how students use language, utilize dialects, and communicate in situations within and outside the classroom.

In the section on dialect options, CCCC provides advice to teachers about assignments and discussions that allow for dialect options. It suggests teachers provide assignments that allow students to “make shifts in tone, style, sentence structure and length, vocabulary, diction, and order” (719). By the end of the section, CCCC speaks on behalf of and to teachers:

By building on what students are already doing well as part of their successes in daily living, we can offer them dialect options which will increase rather than diminish their self-esteem, and by focusing on the multiple aspects of the communication process, we can be sure we are dealing with the totality of language, not merely with the superficial feature of “polite usage.” (720)

Here it seems that the CCCC uses the polite command; by that I mean that the organization insists that teachers take a course of action by politely suggesting that they do it. By using the word “can,” it allows for teachers to feel that they have a choice. But by using the word “we,” it

makes it sound like the suggestion *should* be taken since “we are dealing with the totality of language” (720).

### **Exigencies and Responsibility**

By speaking to and on behalf of teachers, the CCCC attempted to convince teachers to respond to the exigencies. The organization knew that not all teachers would agree with SRTOL—hence, its admission that “the resolution would create controversy” (711). And it also knew that teachers would have questions about SRTOL, which is why it created and anticipated questions about dialect, reading, handbooks, and teaching that it knew needed to be answered. This section, a 1970s version of the “Frequently Asked Questions” section found on today’s Web sites, allowed the organization to address its exigencies within the confines of question/answer categories. These questions, clearly, were determined by the Committee that created the document, but they were influenced by the questions that the Committee *imagined* the general membership would have. Thus, the Committee practiced a form of collective subjectivity in that it imagined the “context, ways of knowing, . . . and experience” (Royster 29) of the general membership. It thought about what the audience would and would not know about language and the teaching of linguistically diverse students.

These exigencies and the way in which the CCCC responded to them through the STROL motivated it to speak on behalf of others in order to effect change in the way dialect speakers were treated in society and within the school system. By speaking on behalf of teachers, the CCCC legitimized its influence on issues regarding language and the teaching of English. Most importantly, it encouraged its rhetorical audiences to reexamine the ways in which they, as teachers, had engaged in linguistic discrimination. It argued that by giving teachers training in

linguistics, it would find ways of addressing the exigence of working with speakers who did not speak and/or write in English.

Earlier in this chapter, I quoted Spivak's discussion of responsibility. I focused on how Spivak conceptualizes responsibility as a form of communication in which someone responds to an implicit call, which I interpreted as an exigence. As I conclude this chapter, I wish to return to Spivak so that I may discuss an additional insight that will help illuminate my foregoing discussion. I am referring to Spivak's claim that "Responsibility annuls the call to which it seeks to respond" ("Responsibility" 19). I believe she says this because she recognizes that responsibility, understood in a certain way, encourages the silencing of individuals, especially those classified as subaltern. In her article about responsibility, she says that "Development is the dominant global denomination of responsibility: the story is that the rich nations collectively hear the call of the ethical and collect to help the poor nations by giving skill and money" (52). The rich, thus, get to re-present the poor by Europeanizing them. Poor nations get the "skills," which will help them achieve the European conception of success. Yes, responsibility involves an "answering to," but to whom is the answer given? The rich, to Spivak, do not have to answer to the subaltern and they do not have to listen to the subaltern. More likely, the rich respond as a rhetorical audience to appeals by made by those who are similarly privileged and wealthy.

In the context of this discussion, the rhetorical audience does not have to consist of the people who are spoken about and for. Ideally it may be beneficial for those who are spoken about and for to have an opportunity to participate in the rhetorical situation by being the ones to effect change. However, the rhetorical audience can consist of people more powerful than those who are spoken on behalf of. Remember, the rhetorical audience (not the general audience) is the one that must have the ability and the power to modify the exigence.

Readers will notice that within my discussion of exigencies I focused primarily on how the CCCC speaks about and re-presents various groups of people. I emphasized the way in which the CCCC described how students negotiated dialects and how teachers taught (and should teach) English. But I also commented on the genres that the CCCC used to discuss the exigencies. The genre—whether one refers to SRTOL as a position statement or a resolution or a mixture of both—served as a tool for advocacy that allowed the CCCC to speak for and about others.

In the first chapter, I noted that when rhetors speak for others, they also simultaneously speak about others. There is no doubt that the CCCC does this in SRTOL. As Alcoff notes, “One may be speaking about others as an advocate or a messenger if the persons cannot speak for themselves” (9). Notice that Alcoff uses two distinct terms, “advocate” and “messenger.” The advocate is someone who is engaged in the form of representation that Spivak discusses in her work on the subaltern. That is, an advocate is someone who serves as a “representative” for another—someone who has the authority to speak for the needs of others (“Subaltern” 276-77). The CCCC uses its I-identity as an organization that can speak for the needs of its members and the students. And it certainly does that with the use of the resolution/position statement. Yet the CCCC also attempts to act as “messenger” by describing the experiences of students and teachers. Thus, when the CCCC engages in re-presentation, it does so as a means of portraying what it considers to be the truth or the reality of those the organization speaks on behalf of.

### **From Exigence to Rhetorical Audience**

In his article, “Functional Communication: A Situational Perspective,” Bitzer goes more in depth about the relationship between the rhetorical audience and the exigence. In fact, Bitzer

provides various theories as to how the rhetorical audience might respond to an exigence.

Ideally, the speaker will help the rhetorical audience understand the “factual conditions” that exist within a situation (29). Thus, the CCCC’s “job” is to show rhetorical audience the exigencies that exist within the educational system. The audience must therefore agree with the CCCC when it declares that educational institutions must address the issue of dialect diversity, especially since educational institutions are experiencing an increase in the number of students coming from various dialectical backgrounds.

If the rhetorical audience and speaker can agree that the factual condition exists, then the speaker must convince the rhetorical audience of the importance of addressing and modifying the exigencies within the factual condition. The issue, of course, becomes problematic if the audience doesn’t agree with the speaker regarding the urgency of the exigence or does not feel compelled to address the exigence. Bitzer hints that the speaker’s use of pathos is important to getting the audience to emotionally connect with the speaker’s message, but he also hints that if the audience is “apathetic” to the speaker, then the exigence may not get addressed (“Functional” 29-30). In many respects the CCCC creates pathos by utilizing the first person words “we” and “our” to discuss the exigence and establish a connection with the audience. In the examples that I provided, the CCCC uses these first-person words in conjunction with verbs that connote urgency: “must” and “should.” The problem is that if the rhetorical audience does not feel that emotional connection, then it could lead the “speaker and audience [to] thus experience different exigencies because the interest component differs” (Bitzer, “Functionality” 30). In other words, the rhetorical audience may not even consider “linguistic discrimination,” “need for linguistic training for teachers,” and “teaching students who speak or write in dialect” to be rhetorical exigencies that need to be addressed—at least right away.

Of course, one of the most important ways a rhetor can connect with the rhetorical audience is to frame the discussion of the document to make it understandable to the audience and to help the audience understand how it should respond to the exigence. The CCCC framed the discussion initially as a resolution, thus proposing as solutions to the exigencies expressed in students' right to their own language. However, today, the CCCC makes it clear that SRTOL is a position statement—a genre that, the CCCC implies, has an exigence, which does not mandate a positive modification of the exigence. Interestingly, both supporters and opponents of SRTOL treated SRTOL as a resolution—one in which teachers were expected to modify the exigencies.

In my next chapter, I will examine the various rhetorical audiences that can modify the exigencies that the CCCC addressed in the document. I will also discuss how some of the audiences reacted to the CCCC speaking on their behalf and what can be learned about speaking on behalf of others.

## **Chapter Four: The Rhetoric of Speaking on Behalf of Others: Rhetorical Audience**

In the previous chapter I discussed the exigencies that SRTOL addressed and the way in which the CCCC spoke on behalf of others while addressing the exigencies. In this chapter, I will discuss the rhetorical audiences and the way in which they reacted to how the organization spoke on behalf of them. To recap, Bitzer describes the rhetorical audience as one that consists of members who not only heed the rhetor's overall message but also carry out a "positive modification" to the exigencies the rhetor discussed in his or her text. Thus, the rhetorical audience is not the same as an audience. Why? Because only the rhetorical audience needs to address or modify an exigence.

### **What is Audience?**

People often assume an audience is the reader, hearer, or receiver of information. But this basic definition is too simplistic. In fact, the definition of an audience must take into consideration how a rhetor relates to and composes text for the audience. When it comes to speeches, for example, the audience of listeners can provide verbal and nonverbal cues to the speaker, which, in turn, can help speakers immediately modify or clarify points as the speech is delivered (Elbow, *Writing* 177; Kroll 174). In some situations, the audience members actually participate in the creation of the speech by heckling, cheering, laughing or applauding the speaker. When this happens, the line between the active speaker and the passive audience is blurred (McIlvenny 27-29). In writing, however, the line between writer and audience is more fixed. As Peter Elbow makes clear, "the readers aren't with us [writers] as we put the words on paper" and readers "don't have us [writers] as they read" the text (*Writing* 177). In other words,



most readers of a published text do not have the opportunity to respond to and thus participate in the *creation* of the text.

Some critics make a distinction between the readers and audience of a written text.

Walter Ong, for example, notes that published writers have no way of knowing their readers, that is, the actual individuals who read the writers' texts. But writers do take note of the audience—a collective group of people to whom they address the text, even if the audience must be imagined (Ong 10-11). Along similar lines, Douglas B. Park notes that the term “readers” is assumed to be literal, while the term “audience” is assumed to be theoretical. The audience, Park states, is “an ideal conception” (250). He says that audience can mean the “actual people external to a text, the audience whom the writer must accommodate” or it can mean “the text itself and the audience implied there, a set of suggested or evoked attitudes, interests, reactions, conditions or knowledge which may or may not fit the qualities of actual readers or listeners” (249). In other words, the writer writes to an audience, a group of people he or she imagines reading the text. Likewise, the writer accommodates his or her discourse and style to that “ideal conception” of the group. An actual reader does not have to be a part of this ideal conception.

For this chapter, I am going to focus on the definition of audience from the perspective of a writer. Thus, I define *audience* as those who not only read and receive information, but also those who respond to it as well.<sup>22</sup> Audiences can respond in any number of ways to writers: for example, audiences may agree or disagree with the writer; they can promote the writer and his or her viewpoints by sharing the writer's work with others; or audiences may even ignore the writer's work if they feel doing so is warranted. In this respect, we must, in the words of Park, think of audience in terms of “how we talk about what writers do” (248). After all, most writers write text in order to elicit a specific response from a reader. For example, Barry Kroll tells us

that writers who compose argumentative essays may envision their audience as possible antagonists who have to be converted to the writers' position; or writers who believe writing is informational may feel that the audience has to have information conveyed to it in a specific way so that the audience processes the information properly (174-76).

Thus, it seems that in some respects, the audience influences the way in which the writer constructs the text. But when exactly does the writer think about the audience and at what point does the audience influence how the text is written? When it comes to writing, Elbow says that "writing is solitary. The readers aren't with us [writers] as we put the words on paper so we are liable to use our own frame of reference and ignore theirs" (*Writing* 177). Here he references not only the physical non-presence of the reader, but also the unconscious or conscious non-conception of an audience when a writer initially writes a text. In his essay, "Closing My Eyes as I Speak: An Argument for Ignoring Audience," Elbow argues that writers should, at times, ignore audience, especially when the audience causes writers to experience writer's block (51).

Of course, there are other critics who assert that writers should be conscious of the audience even before writing a word. The *audience*, as often envisioned within the field of rhetoric, is what Park calls "people-as-they-are-involved-in-a-rhetorical-situation" (249). These are the individuals whom the rhetor wants to address, not the individuals who happen to hear the rhetor's message. Because the rhetor expects these individuals to interact with the text, the rhetor may make stylistic choices that will engage the audience.

In some instances, the stylistic choices the writer makes may also depend on whether or not the author seeks to address or invoke his or her audience. As discussed earlier, Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford point out that the audience addressed theory assumes that the writer already knows about the audience who will read the text. The writer may be conscious of the

socioeconomic, cultural, and/or political background of their readers. As a result, the writer attempts to use appropriate discourse and style to speak and appeal to the addressed audience. Throughout the composition and revision of the text, the writer considers how the audience might respond. This represents what Ede and Lunsford call the “internal dialogue” in which “writers analyze inventional problems and conceptualize patterns of discourse” (158).

In order for the writer to engage in the internal dialogue, the writer has to imagine what the addressed audience is like. Though Ede and Lunsford do not conclude that the very act of imagining an addressed audience can lead to stereotyping or essentializing of the audience, the reality is that sometimes writers do this (Long 74).<sup>23</sup> For example, if a writer writes an argumentative paper on the importance of abortion rights, and the writer sees the audience as antagonistic pro-lifers, then the writer may address a specific audience with certain values, beliefs, religions, et cetera, that some pro-lifers may not have. In fact, the writer’s stereotype (of pro-lifers) can serve as a means of speaking on behalf of pro-lifers. Thus, if a writer imagines pro-lifers as white, middle-class, Midwestern or Southern, religious, and Republican, this is the image that speaks on behalf of pro-lifers and this is the image that the writer addresses.

Of course, the writer can also invoke an audience. The audience invoked theory calls for the writer to persuade the audience to assume a role that the writer has for it (Ede and Lunsford 160). Instead of using style and discourse to speak to an audience, the writer uses style and discourse to get the audience to imagine itself as, say, sympathizers to a mother who feels as if she must have an abortion. Just as stereotyping and essentializing can occur when a writer addresses an audience, stereotyping and essentializing can also occur when a writer invokes an audience. In order to foster audience sympathy for the mother about to get an abortion, does the writer have to create a white mother or black one? A poor mother or a middle-class one? A

teenager who has not finished high school or a college student who is two semesters away from completing a degree? The answers to these questions depend on how a writer utilizes stereotyping and essentializing to get the audience to feel sympathy, anger, or fear for the woman.<sup>24</sup>

Now, I want to make clear that Ede and Lunsford, as well as Ong (whom they use to develop their audience-invoked theories) do not believe (or conclude) that the invocation of an audience is a negative phenomenon, though my discussion of stereotyping and essentializing may make a reader conclude that. What I want to do is make people aware that when invoking—or, for that matter, addressing—an audience, we as writers, at some point, can sometimes generalize (or stereotype) a group of people by giving them characteristics that individual readers may not have. For example, in order to invoke an audience—to imagine the role writers want it to play—writers need to think about the *group* of people the audience will be and how that *group* will react to a given situation. In other words, in the act of speaking to an audience, the writer speaks about that audience and the roles the writer wants the audience to play. Consequently, in a roundabout way, the writer actually speaks on behalf of the audience when addressing or invoking that same audience.

Thus, it is important for writers to recognize the diversity of opinion and experiences within a given audience. In fact, Russell C. Long encourages writers who write persuasive essays to adopt Richard Easton's "moral field" system in which a writer considers the various constraints that make an audience accept and not accept a writer's positions. Once the writer considers an audience's multiple longings and fears or aspirations and failings, then the writer can identify the array of audience opinions and attitudes towards a given topic (75-76). Thus, the

moral field will help writers understand that not *all* pro-lifers think a certain way, nor do they *all* have the same ideas about what an abortion is and what even constitutes pro-life.

Like Long, Mary Jo Reiff also argues for writers to understand the complexity of audience experiences and subjectivities, especially within a social setting (410). This is especially important, since SRTOL was created by a committee and that committee met and responded to readers on a regular basis. Reiff tells us that in situations in which a writer is communicating with (and writing for) multiple readers, all parties can expect to engage in conflict and negotiation (Reiff 414). This is especially true when writers are trying to create a rhetorical audience. In fact, the creation of a rhetorical audience involves understanding the conflicts that may exist between audience and writer and removing those conflicts so that the rhetorical audience will not only respond to the writer, but will also respond to the exigence.

### **Understanding Audience within a Rhetorical Situation**

In his articles on the rhetorical situation, Bitzer describes two audiences: the audience and the rhetorical audience (which he sometimes refers to as the “functional” audience). The audience hears a rhetor’s message and understands the importance of addressing the exigencies suggested by the rhetor. But the rhetorical audience actually addresses the exigencies by attempting to positively modify them. Writes Bitzer, “Since the audience must be capable of modifying the exigence positively, it follows that listeners incapable of this modifying influence will not count as a rhetorical or functional audience” (“Functional” 23). The problem with Bitzer’s “you’re either a rhetorical audience or you’re not” framework is that it does not fully take into consideration how rhetorical audiences come into being.

In their article on Bitzer's rhetorical situation, David M. Hunsaker and Craig R. Smith, for example, highlight the complexity of audience within a given rhetorical situation. Unlike Bitzer, who segments audience into those who rhetorically modify the exigence and those who don't, Hunsaker and Smith segment the audience into those who hear and understand the rhetor's message (situational audience); those to whom the rhetor targets his or her message (actual audience); and those who modify the exigence (the rhetorical audience). Needless to say, some of these audiences are overlapping, but that does not mean that it is impossible to examine each separately, as I will do now.

### *Situational Audience*

Thus far, I have identified a number of different audiences, but of these I prefer Hunsaker and Smith's terms because they show how people can *become* a rhetorical audience. In fact, I will use their terms to discuss how the rhetorical audience comes into being. A look at each of their audiences will illuminate this point.

The first term they use is situational audience. Hunsaker and Smith describe the situational audience as those who serve as "*witness* to the rhetorical situation: knowledge of the rhetorical exigence is direct" (148). In this respect, the situational audience understands the exigence and thus also understands why the rhetor would encourage the audience to modify it.

In chapter two, I discussed various individuals and groups of people who comprised the situational audience. They not only witnessed the rhetorical situation, but they also influenced it as well. These individuals and groups laid the foundation for the CCCC to address exigencies related to linguistic discrimination, lack of linguistic training for teachers, and teaching students who speak and write in dialects. For example, at the 1968 CCCC conference, Ernece B. Kelly

encouraged CCCC members to acknowledge how their racial biases contributed to the discrediting of AAEV speakers (106-07). A year later, members from New University Conference (NUC) participated in the CCCC conference and encouraged the CCCC and NCTE to examine and take a stand against linguistic discrimination in schools and society (Parks 139). In 1971, the NCTE Commission on Language circulated an internal report which called for teachers to “respect the speech that the student brings to school with him” (4). This document encouraged teachers to receive pedagogical training on the teaching of English and dialect speakers of English (6). All of these individuals and groups made it possible for the CCCC to not only be part of the situational audience, but also contributed to the CCCC deciding to become a rhetor.

Of course there were other individuals and groups who witnessed the same exigencies during this time period, yet were not affiliated with the CCCC. For example, Gloria Anzaldúa, as a student at Pan American University during the 1960s, experienced linguistic discrimination when she and her fellow Chicanos were forced to take speech classes designed “to get rid of [their] accents” (76). Stokely Carmichael, in 1965, taught a course at the Work-Study Institute in Mississippi where he and his students discussed prevailing social attitudes regarding standard English and dialects spoken by African Americans and poor whites (Parks 106); and the College Language Association, starting in 1957, began publishing articles in its official journal about how to best teach African American students who spoke and wrote in dialect (Gilyard, “African American” 632-33). Though CLA, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Stokely Carmichael did not work with the CCCC, they witnessed, experienced and had first-hand knowledge of the exigencies which the CCCC addressed.

To be a situational audience, individuals have to have experience with the exigencies; this is why Hunsaker and Smith assert that a rhetor, such as the CCCC, generally comes from the situational audience (148, 152). The rhetor is then responsible for choosing the audiences who will hear and respond to the message. In this respect, the rhetor imagines the actual audience(s) by visualizing who is most likely to be receptive to the message.

### *Actual Audience*

An actual audience, Hunsaker and Smith emphasize, is the “object of the [rhetor’s] discourse” (150). In fact, the actual audience is the audience the rhetor addresses and the audience that the rhetor *expects* or *hopes* will modify the exigence. The main difference between the actual audience and the situational audience is that the situational audience may have people the rhetor either does not seek to directly influence or may not have considered influencing. Thus the situational audience is general, while the actual audience is the specific audience targeted by the rhetor.

### *Rhetorical Audience*

The last audience Hunsaker and Smith focus on is the rhetorical audience. According to Hunsaker and Smith, the actual audience, under the right circumstances, “becomes a rhetorical [audience]” (151). In order for a rhetor to convince the actual audience to act—to essentially become a rhetorical audience—the rhetor must anticipate and address conflicts within actual audience (Hunsaker and Smith 151-53). If these conflicts cannot be resolved, the conflicts, most likely, will prevent people from the actual audience from carrying out the positive modification of the exigence.



One of the ways in which the rhetor can convince the actual audience to become the rhetorical audience is to connect with the audience. Unlike the presumably well-defined line between writer and audience, the line between rhetor and rhetorical audience is indistinct. According to Mary Garret and Xiaosui Xiao, the rhetor (whether speaker or writer) is a part of the rhetorical audience, and, like the rhetorical audience, the rhetor is expected to participate in the positive modification of the exigence (Garret and Xiao 39). This highlights Bitzer's contention that the rhetorical audience and rhetor are "personally involved" in the exigence ("Functional" 32).

To iterate, the rhetorical audience understands the message being addressed. That message generally centers on the exigence or the "defect"; if the rhetorical audience and the rhetor both see, understand, feel, and/or observe the exigence, the exigence, in effect, serves as a means of motivating the rhetorical audience to act. Ideally, the rhetor and the rhetorical audience will feel "personally involved: they feel somehow responsible for it [the exigence] or understand that the exigence or its modification will bring about good or evil for them, their families or friends" (Bitzer, "Functional" 32). Most importantly, the rhetorical audience interprets, contextualizes, and, unlike the situational or actual audience, always *acts* on the writer's or speaker's text.

The rhetorical audience is an audience that is both invoked and addressed. Just as an invoked audience specifically calls for the audience to be persuaded to take on a role, Bitzer's rhetorical audience is encouraged to take on the role of "mediators of change." Without the rhetorical audience, Bitzer tells us, "messages would be futile" ("Political" 239). In other words, the rhetorical audience makes the discussion of the exigence and the overall message significant. After all, it is the rhetorical audience that responds to the message by performing the role the

rhetor has for it. At the same time, the rhetor must speak to or address the audience directly. Assuming that the audience is diverse, the rhetor would have to consider the multiple subjectivities and experiences within the rhetorical audience. It may be that the rhetor realizes that certain members of the rhetorical audience may have to do one thing to respond to the exigence and other members of the rhetorical audience may have to do something completely different. As Hunsaker and Smith make clear, the speaker must “select an actual audience” (152); however, the speaker has to be careful about stereotyping the audience. Thus, it becomes important for the speaker to understand the various perceptions the audience may have regarding the rhetor, exigencies, and the solutions to the exigences (Hunsaker and Smith 151).

To understand the rhetorical audiences that exist for SRTOL, it is important to first understand the situational audiences and the actual audiences and examine how the actual audiences become the rhetorical audiences. In other words, the situational and actual audiences can be regarded as incipient rhetorical audiences. To make this argument, I will focus first on two actual audiences: the Executive Committee of the CCCC and rank and file teachers of writing.

## **Actual Audiences**

### *Actual Audience One: Executive Committee of the CCCC*

The first actual audience for the SRTOL was the Executive Committee of the CCCC. In the 1971 and 1972 Secretary’s Reports published in the CCC, readers get a glimpse of the initial goals of SRTOL, the audiences the CCCC wanted to reach with SRTOL, and the negotiations committee members made regarding style and discourse.

At the 1971 Executive Committee meeting held in Las Vegas, CCCC member Richard Larson suggested that the CCCC establish a sub-committee to create a document supporting students' right to their own language. The goal was to create a document that would "be helpful to teachers" ("Secretary's Report No. 65" 322). Although there had been discussion of creating a resolution affirming students' right to their own language in 1969, a formal document had never come into being ("Secretary's Report No. 66" 323). The CCCC chairperson, Edward P.J. Corbett selected Richard Lloyd-Jones as chair and assigned Geneva Smitherman, Darnel Williams, Myra Harrison, and Ross Winterowd to serve on the task force (Parks 161). Thus the writers of the initial SRTOL consisted of a subcommittee and the actual audience consisted of the Executive Committee to whom they had to report.

Though the Secretary's Report indicated that a "mild statement" regarding students' right had already been made by NCTE ("Secretary's Report No. 65" 322), there seemed to be concerns that the NCTE "Statement on Usage" did not reflect the CCCC beliefs about standard English. According to Stephen Parks, members of the Executive Committee did not agree with the "argument about standard English nor its vision of how standard English should be used to supply students to the U.S. economy" (Parks 162).

The following year the Executive Committee met; CCCC member Lloyd-Jones had been communicating with the sub-committee to determine if the Executive Committee of the CCCC should even issue a language rights statement. According to Stephen Parks, the Executive Committee had already established that this would be the case (Parks 162). Discussion then turned to who should be on the committee to draft the statement, whether or not the CCCC should address spoken and written dialects, and how the NCTE should be involved. It was

decided that the subcommittee needed to come back the next day with a report (“Secretary’s Report No. 66” 324).

The next day, Lloyd Jones had surmised that the actual audience of SRTOL consisted of all teachers: “Lloyd-Jones reported that the sub-committee he chaired thought its goal [was] to provide a brief statement on language that would give teachers on all levels and under a variety of local conditions a guide” (“Secretary’s Report No. 66” 324). Though there had been some question about the feasibility of having a statement, Lloyd-Jones apparently provided the Executive Committee with a rough draft which “he emphasized was not the report of his total committee nor did represent consensus by the committee” (“Secretary’s Report No. 66” 324). Thus, readers can see that because there was not a consensus, there might have been conflicts among the writers; while there is no information as to what the disagreements focused on, the lack of consensus foreshadowed the lack of consensus CCCC members would have regarding the controversial nature of the text.

Though the “Secretary’s Report” did not include in-depth discussions of conversations held at the Executive Committee regarding the statement, it did indicate that members of the Executive Committee discussed the draft and provided suggestions on creating an official committee for SRTOL that would be more inclusive of CCCC membership. Moreover, the Secretary’s Report showed that there had been some conflict regarding the resolution and how it should be interpreted: “In a lengthy discussion, it was pointed out that this [was] not an abandonment of standards and that a larger document was desirable so that a complete background statement and suggestions for implementation (including the training of teachers) could be included” (“Secretary’s Report No. 66” 325). Notice that the discussion was described as “lengthy” and that the sub-committee had to negotiate with the Executive Committee (the

audience) on to how to improve the document. In fact, the report included the Executive Committee revision of Lloyd-Jones statement, but not Lloyd-Jones's original statement. According to Stephen Parks, one draft made clear that it was the CCCC Executive Committee rather than the general membership of the CCCC which affirmed students' right to their own language. However, by the time the final revision was made, the first official SRTOL statement would "speak on behalf of all CCCC members instead of just the Executive Committee" (Parks 164). The modified statement was published in the secretary's report:

We affirm the student's right to his own language—the dialect of his nurture in which he finds his identity and style. Any claim that only one dialect is acceptable should be viewed as attempts of one social group to exert its dominance over another, not as either true or sound advice to speakers and writers, nor as moral advice to human beings. A nation which is proud of its diverse heritage and of its cultural and racial variety ought to preserve its heritage of dialects. We affirm strongly the need for teachers to have such training as will enable them to support this goal of diversity and this right of the student to his own language. ("Secretary's Report No 66" 325)

According to Parks, the last sentence of this paragraph had, in one of the SRTOL drafts, also been written as, "We affirm strongly the need for teachers to have such training as will enable them to support this part of our cultural pluralism" (qtd. in Parks 165). He surmised that the phrase "cultural pluralism" might have been considered too controversial since the phrase was commonly associated with assimilationist politics (166). Likewise, he also noted that the statement did not specify which nation was being addressed and that it did not "offer a specific linguistic or nationalist paradigm through which to understand the resolution's intent" (167).

This, Parks believes, was done to ensure that the CCCC “[make] a moral argument about diversity” rather than a sociopolitical statement about the cultural happenings of the time (Parks 166). Thus we see an attempt to not only speak on behalf of others, but to also do so by carefully avoiding language and terms that would be considered off-putting to its actual audience of teachers.

### *Actual Audience Two: Teachers*

After the Executive Committee approved the one paragraph statement, Elizabeth McPherson, the chair of the CCCC, selected Marianna Davis to lead the subcommittee, which became known as the Task Force. The Task Force was responsible for selecting individuals “knowledgeable in the necessary fields for the purpose of working on explanation and methods of implementing this statement” (“Secretary’s Report No. 66” 326). In other words, these individuals would work on the background statement and bibliography that would help teachers understand the purpose of SRTOL. We know that the final committee which wrote SRTOL consisted of representatives from colleges and ex-officio members from NCTE. Thus, everyone on this committee either represented NCTE or represented educational institutions ranging from community and historically black colleges to Ivy League and Research One institutions.

As teachers, the committee members not only articulated the exigencies, but while doing so, established themselves as part of the actual audience. Earlier in the dissertation, I discussed the way in which the CCCC used first person pronouns to establish a connection between the organization and the actual audience. In this respect, the CCCC was engaging in what Kenneth Burke calls identification and consubstantiation. In his discussion, Burke makes clear that though person A and person B are two separate individuals, A can identify with B when A believes that

there are common interests worth pursuing. Thus A becomes “substantially one with a person other than himself” (Burke 180). It can also mean that person A and person B can form its own discourse community, which can be understood as “communities [that] offer the opportunity for conversations about common goals according to shared methods and standards” (Tomlinson 86).

If we look at person A as the CCCC and person B as teachers, we see how the CCCC sought to interact and seek input from the actual audience of teachers. For example, soon after the CCCC crafted the one-paragraph statement at its 1972 meeting, it mailed the statement to its members and subsequently published their replies in its October 1972 issue of *CCC*. In some respects, this constitutes a form of peer review in which readers provide feedback to the CCCC, which the CCCC can then use to improve the text. According to Barbara Tomlinson, peer reviewed articles can also serve as a means of consubstantiation between writer and audience within an academic discourse community (89). After all, the writer *ideally* seeks to use a common discourse—that is, language, standard, and style—shared between himself or herself and the audience. During the peer review process, the writer interacts with editors of the journal who *seem* to understand the audience and can help the writer effectively communicate within the discourse community.

Notice I use the terms “ideally” and “seem” to highlight the idyllic conditions under which consubstantiation can occur. Not surprisingly, identification and consubstantiation can also involve conflict. After all, Burke notes that “a way of life is an *acting-together*; and in acting together, men have common sensations, concepts, images, ideas and attitudes that make them *consubstantial*” (181). The problem is that sometimes people encounter conflict in order to find these commonalities. Burke, in fact, uses the term “division” to describe the conflict that occurs before cooperation (and perhaps consubstantiation) can occur (181); additionally, both

parties' location of similarities also involves subordinating important interests in order for identification to occur.

In fact, several replies to the one-paragraph statement criticized the CCCC for the statement and showed that readers refused to engage in identification with CCCC. Among other issues, William Pixton's response focused on what he saw as vague terms—"dialect of his nurture," "identity and style," and "moral advice to humans." In fact, in a parenthetical note he wondered if the CCCC meant "identity" when it used the word "dialect." Likewise, he questioned what he saw as the appropriateness of using the "dialect of his nurture" in various situations such as job interviews (Letter 299-300).

The other responder, John R. Hendrikson, engaged in mockery as a means of not only criticizing SRTOL but also as a means of ridiculing CCCC. He wrote, "Of corse this aint rote in the dialect of my nurture or any other sombitch I know about unles its som wasp imperialist but is ok anyways because it aint gonna be nobodies langwich in a few yeers it never shud of bin" (300). Not only did Hendrikson choose to disengage in the seemingly shared academic discourse within the community, but he also intentionally engaged in conflict in order to prove his point that SRTOL was a political tract emphasizing what he interpreted as SRTOL's lessening of standard English (wasp imperialism) (300).

In fact, Hendrikson's article represents the complexities of discourse communities. Not everyone within a given discourse community utilizes the same discourse to communicate. As Tomlinson notes, readers who respond to peer reviewed articles can emphasize how the writer is not a part of the discourse community by pointing out the writer's stylistic, thematic, and research "errors" and flaws (91). This is certainly what Pixton and Hendrikson do. But readers can also misinterpret articles (Tomlinson 92) as SRTOL committee member Adam Casmier



accuses Robert P. Saalbach of doing when Saalbach implies that SRTOL has an “anything goes” approach to language (Saalbach 416). In actuality, Casmier asserted that “Saalbach’s response is dangerous . . . because it makes a reasonable, and long overdue, resolution seem radical” (227).

I want to highlight Casmier’s de-emphasis on the radicalism of SRTOL. Casmier’s de-emphasis reinforces Parks criticism that the one-paragraph statement “removed the teacher from the immediate terrain of the 1970s classroom. It offered no concrete meaning for teachers facing an increasingly varied and politically active student population” (166-67). The statement, thus, was devoid of the discussions of the effects of racial integration in school, the arrival of first generational students, and student participation in Vietnam protests, all issues that were perceived to be radical in nature. In this respect, it is similar to the NCTE Commission on Language statement, which also carefully avoided these issues.

And despite the attempt to depoliticize and deradicalize the statement, the responders, as shown above, were able to see the (radical) politics inherent within the paragraph. This is because the paragraph emphasized divisions among not only among social groups: “Any claims that only one dialect is acceptable should be viewed as attempts of one social group to exert its dominance over another” (“Secretary’s Report No. 66” 325), but also teachers and students: “We affirm strongly the need for teachers to have such training as will enable them to support this goal of diversity and this right of the student to his own language” (“Secretary’s Report No. 66” 325).

In fact, Stephen Parks shows that McPherson also responded personally to letters written to the CCCC. Though he does not republish the letters written to the CCCC, he does note that critics complained about SRTOL’s “practical effects and scholarly support” (176). As a result, the resolution was amended to the resolution we see today<sup>25</sup>:

We affirm the students' right to *their own patterns and varieties of language*—the dialects of *their nurture or whatever* dialects in which *they* find *their own* identity and style. *Language scholars long ago denied that the myth of a standard American dialect has any validity. The claim that any one dialect is unacceptable amounts to* an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another. *Such a claim leads to false advice for speakers and writers, and immoral advice for humans. A nation proud of its diverse heritage and cultural and racial variety will preserve its heritage of dialects. We affirm strongly that teachers must have the experiences and training that will enable them to respect diversity and uphold the right of students to their own language* (CCCC 710-711).<sup>26</sup>

Because the CCCC received input from the actual audience of teachers, the CCCC decided to address their concerns by including phraseology specifying research. For instance, language was soon described as consisting of “patterns and varieties,” two key terms that harken to linguistics. Moreover, the organization specifically talked about linguists or language scholars: “Language scholars long ago denied that the myth of a standard American dialect has any validity” (CCCC 710). After discussing what language scholars said, the document immediately talked about “the claim.” As Parks notes, because the organization removed the original phrase “any claim” and replaced it with the phrase “the claim,” it made it sound like it was language scholars who were talking about a specific claim, rather than the organization talking about a generalized claim (Parks 177).

In addition to tweaking the resolution, the Task Force subcommittee, now chaired by Melvin Butler, had to produce a background report. According to McPherson's note sent to Butler, the subcommittee's product “will be extremely important to college English instructors

and to the students they teach” (qtd. in Parks 179). This background statement would include the scholarly information that had been missing from the original draft. However, by the time the Task Force and the Executive Committee of the CCCC met, the actual audience for the document expanded.

### **An Attempted Actual Audience: The General Public**

In his 1993 speech regarding the history of SRTOL, Lloyd-Jones asserted that “the prime purpose of the resolution was to challenge and educate the public at all levels” (5). This assertion was highlighted in the November 22, 1972 Executive Committee meeting which indicated that the Task Force wanted the final document to be geared towards those in business as well as education. According to the minutes, the Executive Committee and the Task Force spent considerable time discussing who the audience of SRTOL would be (“Secretary’s Report No. 67” 333). By the time of the next meeting in April of 1973, the Executive Committee made it clear to the Task Force that the audience needed to include other groups of people including parents (“Secretary’s Report No. 68” 338).

Moreover, if we examine the background statement, we’ll see that on the surface, SRTOL addressed the general public. A part of the background statement read:

The members of the Committee realized that the resolution would create controversy and that without a clear explanation of the linguistic and social knowledge on which it [STROL] rests, many people would find it incomprehensible. The members of the Executive Committee, therefore, requested a background statement which would examine some common

misconceptions about language and dialect, define some key terms, and provide some suggestions for sounder, alternate approaches. (CCCC 711)

Notice that the CCCC used the generic term “people” as opposed to the more restrictive terms of “members” or “teachers.” This was important, for the organization not only addressed the members and teachers, but it also suggested that there was some attempt here to address a more general public. After all, the actual resolution itself alluded to American diversity, hinted at American oppression of groups and discussed how the “claim that any one dialect is unacceptable” was not just bad for speakers and writers but constitutes “immoral advice for humans” (711). This certainly confirmed Lloyd-Jones contention that the ultimate purpose of the document was to “challenge and educate the public at all levels” (5).

If we examine the document from a generic standpoint, one can say that the document as a position statement is designed to help the public at large understand how an organization assumes a stance towards the topic; as a resolution, the document is designed to help the public see how the organization addresses and proposes to resolve an issue. But, if the document, as a resolution, is designed to “challenge and educate the public,” and if the document encourages the general public to “do something,” that is, to address the recognized exigencies of the situation, then that would mean that the general public would first become an actual audience who witnesses the exigencies and then later become a rhetorical audience who acts on the urgencies of the situation.

The reality, however, is that the general public (in this instance) cannot serve as the rhetorical audience. As Bitzer points out, the rhetorical audience must be able to effect change and modify the exigence. Some of the challenges in having the general public as the rhetorical audience may be identified: attracting mainstream media to the issue; making sure the audience

understands the exigencies the CCCC is trying to address; convincing the audience that what the CCCC is saying is true; and helping the audience understand the need to address the exigencies, especially in regard to linguistic discrimination. Most important, it is difficult to transform the general public into an “agent of change.” Like the rhetorical audience, an agent of change has the ability to address the issue the rhetor wants him or her to address. However, as Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Susan Schultz Huxman make clear, the “agent of change” is someone who has the political, economic, and/or social power to modify the exigencies (186-87). The general public, which consists of people from all classes, ethnicities, regions, nationalities, educational levels, religions, political affiliations, et cetera, is, needless to say, difficult for a rhetor to influence. After all, a rhetor has to make sure that the general public understands and agrees to the modification of the exigency.

The problem is that the CCCC could not turn the general public into an actual audience because it was unable to attract mainstream media attention to its cause. Therefore, people such as Anzaldúa, Carmichael, and supportive members of CLA, who might have witnessed and wanted to modify the exigencies addressed by the CCCC, would have had difficulty learning about SRTOL. In fact, my study shows that influential newspapers or magazines did not run major stories on SRTOL. When newspapers and magazines did write about SRTOL, the coverage was negative. For example, J. Mitchell Morse’s 1976 *New York Times* commentary lambasted the organization for the passage of the resolution; Merrill Sheils’ 1975 *Newsweek* article entitled “Why Johnny Can’t Write” referred to SRTOL as a “political tract” not a “set of educational precepts” (Sheils); and Thomas H. Middleton’s 1986 *Los Angeles Times* article, “Disrespect of Language Takes Its Toll” critiqued the way in which SRTOL, in his opinion, was used to justify “the loss of respect for any established standards” (3). In 2003, the *Rutland*

*Herald* in Vermont published Peter Berger's article in which he interpreted SRTOL as NCTE's "[recommendation] that teachers ignore writing errors."<sup>27</sup>

Though there had been discussions among CCCC members about attracting a general public and transforming that public into a rhetorical audience, the reality is that this did not occur. For one, several key members focused on specific actual audiences. McPherson's note to Butler focused on the importance of SRTOL to teachers; Lloyd-Jones initial impression was that the purpose of SRTOL was to help teachers; and Stephen Parks concluded that Lloyd-Jones' early draft seemed to indicate that the document was to represent all members of the CCCC, a specific group of teachers.

### **Converting Situational and Actual Audiences into Rhetorical Audiences**

To convert a situational and actual audience into a rhetorical audience, the rhetor must be able to convince the situational and actual audiences to rhetorically modify the exigence. In the discussion of the rhetorical audience, Craig R. Smith and Scott Lybarger iterate two key points from Hunsaker and Smith: "the goal of the rhetor is to find an audience with two key properties: first, the power to correct or improve the exigence, and second, agreeing with the perception or susceptibility to persuasion" (200). When Hunsaker and Smith discuss perception, they refer to how both the rhetor and audience recognize and interpret the exigence (151). Lloyd Bitzer provides a listing of how rhetors and audiences respond to exigencies, and their responses, in many respects, correlate with their perceptions of the exigencies. Though Bitzer's list, which he calls "Responsiveness to Exigences," does not talk about identification and consubstantiation, it is clear that rhetor and audience need to identify with each other and, as Burke would emphasize, become "substantially one" (Burke 180).

One of the ways in which the CCCC committee on SRTOL attempted to identify with their actual audience of teachers is through constant communication with the actual audiences. Though the SRTOL Committee had received continual feedback from the Executive Committee, it also received feedback from respondents who communicated with individual members or through CCC. The CCCC's SRTOL committee changed some of the contents of SRTOL based on feedback they received in an attempt to make SRTOL not only more palatable to the membership but also to convince the membership to adopt the core beliefs of the document.

On the "Responsiveness to Exigences" list, Bitzer writes, "Speaker and audience are also more likely to respond if they believe their efforts must occur now or never—that there is no opportunity for postponement" ("Functional" 33), hence, the nearly synonymous use of the terms "exigences" and "urgencies." Here he points to the fact that the rhetor and audience agree that some course of action must happen. There is a short window of time and both rhetor and audience must modify the exigence—together. Related to the concept of "now or never" is the notion of fully understanding the seriousness of a given situation. In his discussion on the differences between understanding the Holocaust as fact and knowing the Holocaust as a reality, Bitzer points out that when *knowing* a factual condition, both rhetor and audience can, for example, "apprehend [the Holocaust] directly and sensibly" ("Functional" 32). Thus, it is up to speaker to provide a "vivid representation" of a given situation to the audience. In this respect, both rhetor and audience share a bond—that is the knowledge of the exigence and the circumstances that may have produced the exigence ("Functional" 32).

Hence, Bitzer implies that it is up to the speaker to provide the context and details concerning the need to address the exigence immediately. One of the things that stood out to me about SRTOL was that the CCCC did not go into detail about the cultural and political

happenings at the time, and, most importantly, did not provide a vivid representation as to why the exigencies exist and why they need to be addressed immediately. Perhaps the CCCC felt that by using the phrase, “social upheavals of the 1960s” (CCCC 709), the audience would understand implicitly what it was referring to. But, then again, perhaps if the CCCC had gone into detail, it might have ended up being associated with overtly leftist politics, something it wanted to avoid (Parks 166-67).

Most importantly, the CCCC did not discuss concretely the ways in which the country had engaged in linguistic discrimination of students. SRTOL did not mention how, during the nineteenth century, Native Americans were prohibited from speaking their indigenous languages in schools (Aguilera and LeCompte 72). SRTOL did not discuss the discrimination against linguistically marginalized students through the Hawaiian English Standard school system during the twentieth century; it did not mention how some schools and universities required Chicano students (or other linguistically marked students) to take speech classes designed to remove the students’ accents. (See Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera* for more information.) Had the CCCC done this, it would have shown that the United States had a history of engaging in linguistic oppression within the educational sphere.

Nevertheless, the CCCC had to invoke and address the audiences in order to convince them to examine their attitudes towards dialects and to respect the dialects that students already have. By providing the stage for audiences to examine their attitudes towards dialects and language, the CCCC began the process of converting the audiences into rhetorical audiences. Likewise, it also directly addressed the actual audience of teachers, especially with its use of the background statement. The inclusion of the background statement did more than provide additional information. It was, in essence, a persuasive piece addressed to its audience of



teachers. CCCC geared the piece to address issues related to curriculum, pedagogy, textbooks, and the like. By addressing and invoking the audience simultaneously, it created a rhetorical audience of teachers who can effect change in the classrooms.

Before I go into detail about the rhetorical audience of teachers, I want to examine how the CCCC transformed the Executive Committee from an actual audience to a rhetorical audience.

## **Rhetorical Audiences and Their Reactions to SRTOL**

### *Rhetorical Audience One: Executive Committee*

Throughout the process of creating the document, the Executive Committee provided feedback to the Task Force and in many instances ordered, not merely suggested, changes. For example, at the Executive Committee meeting in April of 1973, the Executive Committee ordered the removal of gendered pronouns in the resolution, insisted that the document be written for those who “are not linguistically oriented” (“Secretary’s Report No. 68” 338), and initially wanted to expand the audience so that it was not limited to the teachers. Additionally, several members commented on how initial drafts of the background statement seemed to “‘play down’ the high school teacher” and that it exhibited a “patronizing attitude towards the high school teacher” (“Secretary’s Report No. 68” 338). In other words, the Executive Committee did not want language that would alienate specific audiences.

Likewise, the Executive Committee debated the following:

- Dialects to emphasize in the background statement.
- Definition and description of English as a language.

- The statement, “The claim that any one dialect is unacceptable amounts to an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another.” In fact, thirteen people voted not to re-word that statement at the 1973 meeting, though seven wanted to modify it.
- Format of the background statement, especially the introduction and the bibliography.
- Pedagogy that teachers needed to have especially as it relates to “how to deal with linguistic options, with students, teachers’ procedures in classrooms, in private conversations with students, general linguistic knowledge and the understanding of it” (“Secretary’s Report No. 68” 338).
- The purpose of the document and the audiences for SRTOL. (“Secretary’s Report No. 68 338-339).

The last point was important because there was debate as to whether SRTOL should primarily be a pedagogical document or a document that also examined the ethical and philosophical concerns related to language. If SRTOL were solely a pedagogical document then it was a document that was geared specifically for teachers. To be effective as a pedagogical document, SRTOL would thus have to provide specific guidelines as to how teachers should use SRTOL in the classroom. Accordingly, it seems that SRTOL would be a resolution designed to solve a specific problem. However, if SRTOL were a philosophical document, then the audience would be broader. Not only could the CCCC speak to teachers, but it could also speak to the general public. Moreover, there was discussion about the possibility of creating two documents, one designed for the public and the other designed for teachers. Having two documents could certainly address the controversy regarding the overall purpose of SRTOL, especially as it related to audiences (“Secretary’s Report No. 68” 339). This, of course, did not happen.

Nevertheless, the Executive Committee also debated and voted whether or not it should limit SRTOL's audience to English teachers or address teachers from all fields. In the end the Executive Committee tabled the following motion: "That the primary audience of this document be the English profession" ("Secretary's Report No 68" 339). By the end of the Executive Committee meeting, the Executive Committee had provided the Task Force with additional editorial suggestions. Interestingly, a motion was made and accepted for the following: "that the committee be asked to provide the background to the statement on language explaining and supporting the resolution and not go into further detail regarding classroom implementation" ("Secretary's Report No. 68" 340).

The fact that the Executive Committee was so divided on the content, goals, and audiences for SRTOL is significant because it seemed as if it were unable to answer this question that had been posed at the Executive Committee meeting: "For whom are we speaking?" ("Secretary's Report No. 68"). Was the Committee speaking for the organization, teachers in general, English teachers specifically, students, and/or the general public? Related to the question of for whom the Committee spoke, the Committee seemed confused as to whom it wanted to speak. Based on the Secretary's Report, I'm not sure that the Executive Committee or the Task Force committee concretely answered that question. For one, the CCCC was still debating the audiences it wanted to address. I believe that the CCCC knew it wanted teachers as the primary audience, but it also seemed as if the organization was trying to figure out if it wanted additional audiences. Secondly, the CCCC debated what it wanted to invoke from the audiences. Did it want the audience to reconsider how it examined language? Did it want the audience to be more respectful of people (not just students) who used dialects other than standard

English? Lastly, the CCCC seemed to be implicitly debating whether or not it wanted to speak for students, for the organization, for teachers in general or English teachers in particular.

In addition to struggling to understand to whom and for whom the CCCC spoke, the CCCC seemed to struggle with understanding the technicalities of SRTOL and which audiences would use the document; related to this, the organization also seemed to debate the function of the document. For the Executive Committee to discuss the possibility of *not* exploring classroom implementation of SRTOL might have left people wondering what the purpose of the document was. Readers, especially teachers, may have wondered why a document that was described by McPherson to Butler as “extremely important” to educators and students would not be used, implemented, or applied in a classroom setting.

The important take-away is that at this particular meeting, the Executive Committee was divided as a group about SRTOL as a document. The Task Force clearly had more work to do in terms of convincing the Executive Committee to not only respond, but to also act on the report. Not only did the Task Force have to work through the conflicts that occurred between a group of writers and an actual audience, but it also had to negotiate how it would revise the document in time for the next Executive Committee meeting scheduled for November of 1973.

By the November 1973 meeting, Melvin Butler, who had chaired the committee which produced the background statement for SRTOL, had died. Nevertheless, the Task Force had presented the Executive Committee with an updated draft and took questions regarding the “rhetoric used, the political implications, and the controversial nature of the background statement” (“Secretary’s Report No. 69” 331). Stephen Parks notes that some at the meeting seemed to have been confused about what specifically SRTOL was endorsing and how teachers

were supposed to use SRTOL. Although discussion was held regarding whether the resolution could be reworded, the decision to reword the resolution had been turned down (Parks 191).

Unlike previous meetings in which the Executive Committee debated about the actual audience of the piece, discussion focused on the distribution of SRTOL to various audiences. It was decided that the CCCC membership would receive a special letter with a copy of SRTOL by mail prior to its 1974 Conference in Anaheim, California. Additionally, discussion then turned to how to provide SRTOL to audiences beyond the CCCC. People debated whether to provide the document for free or to charge a cost. Despite what looks like on paper a spirited meeting, the Executive Committee did not unanimously agree on the following motion: “That the covering letter indicate approval of the resolution by the Executive Committee and recommend that the membership approve the resolution at the business meeting” (“Secretary’s Report No. 69” 331). While the overwhelming number of people at the Executive Meeting agreed to the motion (twelve), there were four who voted no and two who abstained.

### *Rhetorical Audience Two: Teachers*

Though SRTOL did not receive much attention in mainstream media, it received quite a bit of attention in academic journals read by those within the English profession. Because of this, the CCCC had the opportunity to persuade CCCC members and English teachers in general to be the rhetorical audiences for SRTOL. Not only did the CCCC reference college teachers, which make up the core members of the CCCC, but it also referenced English teachers who worked in primary and secondary education. In the background statement of the document, the CCCC acknowledged the mandatory requirement that students attend primary and secondary schools and discussed what happens to students who come from homes where standard English is the

norm: “They sit in the head of the class, are accepted at ‘exclusive’ schools, and are later rewarded with positions in the business and social world” (710). Thus, the organization implied that success began for these students in primary and secondary schools. To help those who tend to be less successful due to dialect differences, the organization encouraged “English teachers, at all levels from kindergarten through college, [to] uncover and examine some of the assumptions on which our teaching has rested” (709-10). The organization requested that the audience members carry out the exigencies by 1) understanding the pedagogy of how English is taught; 2) educating themselves in linguistics; and 3) revising their pedagogical approaches to the teaching of English to those who do not speak and/or write in standard English.

Because most of the members of the CCCC are teachers on the college level, I, at times, reference the membership of CCCC; however, I also recognize that the CCCC is also speaking to and for individuals who are not members of the CCCC and I acknowledge these individuals as well.

Linda Alcoff tells us that “the rituals of speaking that involve the location of the speaker and listeners affect whether a claim is taken as a true, well-reasoned, compelling argument, or significant idea” (13). In other words, to understand how successful the CCCC was in speaking on behalf of English teachers, readers need to understand how English teachers reacted to the document and how or why they may have agreed or disagreed with the document. Most importantly, we have to understand the style and the logic used to create the “well-reasoned, compelling argument” that seeks to influence the audience to accept how it speaks on behalf of them or another group of people.

On one hand, the style of the resolution itself was forthright. The first two words of this one hundred eight one word resolution were “We affirm”; the first three words of the last

sentence of the resolution were “we affirm strongly.” On the other hand, the style of the background statement was defensive. It anticipated that the audience might not believe that the claims in the document were “true” and/or “well-reasoned.” To restate, CCCC envisioned its primary audience of English teachers as being confused: “The members of the Committee realized that the resolution would create controversy and that without a clear explanation of the linguistic and social knowledge on which it rests, many people would find it incomprehensible” (711). Thus, committee members did what Walter Ong suggests fiction writers do when thinking about an audience: “First, the writer must construct in his imagination, clearly or vaguely, an audience cast in some sort of role—entertainment seekers, reflective sharers of experience, . . . inhabitants of a lost and remembered world of prepubertal latency . . . , and so on” (12). In some regards, the committee saw the audience as “reflective sharers of experience.” The committee anticipated that the audience of English teachers would be perplexed by the necessity of the document and claims made in the document. To help readers understand the document, the committee attempted to use the background statement to “answer some of the questions the resolution will raise” (711). This led to the second component of audience that Ong considers: “a reader has to play the role in which the author has cast him, which seldom coincides with his role in the rest of actual life” (12). Thus, the committee expected the audience to question the theories used to inform the creation of the document; and it was certainly possible that the committee would want the audience to eventually agree with the resolution and background statement.

Moreover, the committee expected that the rhetorical audience would modify the exigencies addressed in the document. Thus, the committee used the word “we,” which was used to create a camaraderie (or, as Burke would say, an identification) between itself and English teachers. For example, an excerpt from the beginning of the background statement said,

“And many of us have taught as though the function of schools and colleges were to erase differences. Should we, on the one hand, urge creativity and individuality in the arts and the sciences, take pride in the diversity of our historical development, and, on the other hand, try to obliterate all the differences in the way Americans speak and write?” (710). By the end of the document, readers knew the answer to the rhetorical questions: “Common sense tells us that if people want to understand one another, they will do so. Experience tells that we can understand any dialect of English after a reasonably brief exposure to it. And humanity tells us that we should allow every man the dignity of his own way of talking” (726).

To understand the complexity of the responses from the rhetorical audience of teachers, we need to understand the role that identity plays in the audience’s acceptance of the organization speaking on its behalf as well as the audience’s willingness to modify the exigence. As was discussed in an earlier chapter, the institutional identity (I-Identity) of the CCCC revolves around advocacy. It is an organization specifically designed to represent the teachers and field of Composition and Rhetoric within academia as well as within the National Council for the Teachers of English. Moreover, CCCC has various caucuses (or affinity groups) which advocate for various issues within Rhetoric and Composition. Thus, the organization seems to be, by its very nature, one that is supposed to speak on behalf of its membership and teachers.

I argue that some members of the actual audience of English teachers and CCCC members reacted negatively to the CCCC speaking on behalf of them because their identities as English teachers did not correspond to the identity of the English teacher that SRTOL attempted to construct. As a result, the audience of English teachers and CCCC members split to form two informal (though not officially recognized) affinity groups related to SRTOL: supporters and opponents of SRTOL. The affinity groups spoke on behalf of each other by engaging in



advocacy and re-presentation. Additionally, they also spoke on behalf of their opponents by re-presenting them negatively. To supporters of SRTOL, the English teacher was one who advocated for students; the English teacher recognized and tried to resolve the disconnect between the linguistic acceptance of (nonstandard English) dialect and the societal disapproval of that dialect. Opponents, on the other hand, emphasized the non-acceptance of student dialect by the general society, and they focused on students having to learn to conform to society's standard of what acceptable English was in the workforce and in the classroom.

Opponents of SRTOL portrayed or re-presented teachers as those who should help students learn standard English. They emphasized that students live in a society that as a general rule did not accept alternate dialects in the workplace or within educational arenas. The goal of the English teacher was not to change society, but to help students understand how to communicate within society. SRTOL opponent William Pixton wrote, "Teachers must not allow their students to remain linguistically different *and* deficient, thus ensuring [the students'] communicative attempts as well as their comprehension will be inadequate" ("Contemporary" 252); Allen Smith asserted that teachers "are custodians of the past. No matter how often we embrace the idea of 'relevance' or 'accountability' in education, our particular role in any society is to gather and disseminate the standards and values of the past for the coming generation to our respective chosen fields" (156); and David L. Shores believed that teachers should "respect diversity," but teachers must also make clear to students that "members of language communities *do* have attitudes toward their language and its varieties. Schools and colleges . . . must inform us about those attitudes and the situation as it is . . ." (9). Notice that the emphasis was on how dialect marked the student as different and how the teacher's job was to help the student assimilate into mainstream society.

To assist in the assimilation, teachers had to inculcate the “values” of middle-class respectable society. According to Lynn Z. Bloom, the composition classroom was supposed to serve as a primary means of helping students attain linguistic respectability in the workplace and within society. The teacher, therefore, was seen as responsible for emphasizing “correctness” (i.e. grammar) and “decorum” (i.e. formality, not dialect) (Bloom 659-60). In fact, Richard P. Caporale, in his article against SRTOL, highlighted Bloom’s assertions when he made clear that the “teachers of language (or its guardians, at least)” should concern themselves with helping students move up the socioeconomic ladder (105). By doing this, teachers helped students get rid of the deficiencies Pixton alluded to and disseminate standards that Allen proposed.<sup>28</sup>

Opponents of SRTOL pointed out why the CCCC did not speak on behalf of them. In the *Inside English* journal, one opponent of SRTOL believed that SRTOL took a condescending tone towards teachers. After explaining that teachers knew not to belittle students with non-standard dialects, the person wrote, “In short, I find the air of the essay under discussion to be patronizing at the least, if not actually derogatory” (2). Jeff Zorn contended that “SRTOL tries to shame English Teachers” for emphasizing standard English in the classroom (325). He believed teachers who rejected the tenets of SRTOL and engaged in “purposeful instruction in Formal Written English” help students enter into professional and educational domains (326). Most importantly, opponents also pointed out that the people SRTOL seek to speak on behalf of—the students, especially students of color—might not agree with SRTOL. Susan Passler Miller, for example, provided commentary on her perception of how African American students viewed the document: “Black students who hear about ‘The Students’ Right to Their Own Language’ may respond by asking what new shuck and jive this is. Whatever that resolution’s intentions are, these students suspect that they’re being hustled, denied the same prescriptive help that elevated

some of us above otherwise predictable lower-class futures” (13). Here she implied that black students wish linguistic assimilation because it meant the possibility of socioeconomic improvement. Jeff Zorn told readers that upon reading SRTOL, his African American mentor at a historically black college in Alabama declared, “With friends like these, black children hardly need enemies” (qtd. in Zorn 311). While we see Zorn’s mentor speaking on behalf of African American children, we also get a sense of how at least one African American professor views the document with disdain.

Supporters of SRTOL, however, portrayed or re-presented teachers as being responsible for helping students achieve individuality, self-esteem, and knowledge within a subject matter. Vandover stressed the obligation teachers have “to help the student arrive at his fullest possible competency in language” (5); and Glissmeyer wondered if teachers were doing the following:

As English teachers are we talking to our students and our colleagues about how society uses language “as its most insidious means of control, how we are led to judge others—and ourselves—by criteria which have no real bearing on actual worth”? Are we doing whatever we can in working for social justice? In the farther reaches of our total lives are we concerned that the affairs of the community should be conducted by one or all of the constituencies? (204)

In other words, Glissmeyer questioned how proactive teachers were in helping students not only understand the social components of language but also contributing in the improvement of society. This need for the English teacher to improve the society in which he or she lived was echoed implicitly by James Sledd. Sledd commented that many teachers were ignorant of the issues that face the working class and poor and naively assume that all students would want to

learn standard English norms. He pointed out that there were some students who “have much greater concerns than the details of usage, the study of socially graded synonyms” (Sledd 673). Like the writers of SRTOL, he believed that if a student chose not to learn standard English, the teachers should design assignments that would allow the student to develop continuing literacy in his or her own dialect. Teachers who did this, Sledd acknowledged, would end up challenging society, and society’s insistence on the supremacy of standard English (Sledd 674-75).

As teachers define “the role of the English teacher,” they engage in re-presentation and representation which Spivak discusses in her work. Though she uses these terms to critique the way in which academics represent the subaltern, these terms are important for understanding the way in which teachers portray themselves. To iterate, re-presentation refers to the way in which someone or a group is portrayed and representation refers to the way in which someone is spoken for (Spivak, “Subaltern” 275). When teachers describe the role of teachers and what they are expected to do, they engage in re-presentation. This re-presentation is a depiction, in many respects, an idealized depiction of how the English teacher should behave. Additionally, the re-presentation also serves as a means of creating an institutional identity for the English teacher. After all, this institutional identity highlights how the English teacher fits into society. Notice, for example, how Allen Smith focused on the traditional role of the English teacher: “the custodians of the past”; Caporale saw them as “guardians” of the language; and Glissmeyer concentrated on what teachers should do: “[work] for social justice”; the descriptions of the role of the English teacher help to institutionalize the profession within society.

Nonetheless, because teachers engage in re-presentation, they also have an opportunity to use their own subjectivity in speaking on behalf of themselves as individuals, as well as speaking on behalf of their fellow teachers. According to Royster, “subjectivity as a defining value pays

attention dynamically to context, ways of knowing, language abilities, and experience, and by doing so it has a consequent potential to deepen, broaden, and enrich our interpretive views in dynamic ways” (29). Writers such as Pixton, Smith, Shores, Glissmeyer, Caporale, and Sledd all provided their own interpretation and used their experiences as teachers to speak for themselves; but when they (and by extension CCCC) discussed what teachers *should* do, their subjectivity became problematic because they assumed that all teachers shared the same subjectivity, the same “ways of knowing” and the same pedagogical context for the teaching of English.

I want to make clear that I am not saying that opponents of SRTOL did not acknowledge the exigencies that existed in SRTOL. Many, in fact, recognized that more and more dialect-speaking students were entering the classroom, and thus, believed that teachers should have linguistic training to help address the needs of these students. It seemed that they had constructed a different identity for the English teacher, one that could not accept some of the precepts that existed in the SRTOL. When Linda Alcoff discusses the “social location of the speaker,” (the identity) we need to think about the social location of CCCC and how that location differed from some members of the audience.

In re-presenting the English teachers, the writers also engaged in another form of speaking on behalf of others: advocacy or (representation) for the English teacher. Many opponents both implicitly and explicitly called for teachers to reject some if not all of the premises of SRTOL. C. Lamar Thompson and Juanita V. Williamson said that there needed to be a “statement on the students’ right to be taught standard English” (“Bait/Rebait” 13); the person against SRTOL in *Inside English* asked this question: “Are we going to use the English teacher in his classroom as a tool to carry out the particular ideology of the Executive Committee of CCCC?” (“Students’ Right” 6). The answer was presumably no. Pixton pointed out that the

primary purpose of his article, “A Contemporary Dilemma,” was “to encourage the CCCC membership to reject the resolution” (247), while it was clear that Zorn’s article called for “repudiating SRTOL and the entire body of mis-educative ‘counter-hegemonic training’ that has followed in its wake” (326). Because opponents called for the rejection of SRTOL, this affinity group could not be an ideal rhetorical audience, since it sought to actively undermine SRTOL.

To show how they were separate from opponents of SRTOL, supporters of SRTOL used labels and terms to describe those who disagree with their ideologies. Elizabeth McPherson and Eleanor Kutz, for example, referred to their opponents as “traditionalists” (McPherson “Language” 75; Kutz 385) and James Sledd referred to them as “conformists” (672). The term “traditionalist” has a specific meaning in Rhetoric and Composition, at least to the degree that it echoes the term “current-traditionalism,” a term of disparagement among compositionists. Current-traditionalists are seen as teachers who are more interested in having students conform to grammar rules and less interested in the content of students’ papers. In fact, Robert J. Connors called traditionalists (he does not use the term current-traditionalist) “the front-line teachers, the proponents of writing as a vocational skill” (70). In contrast, Connors defined rhetoricians as teachers interested in “writing as discovery or communication” (70). The traditionalists or current-traditionalists, thus, were re-presented as scholars who were opposed to student individuality (though I’m sure traditionalists would not see themselves as such). They were more concerned with how students conformed to the rules of the grammar handbook. Sledd’s use of the term “conformist” corresponded to the term “traditionalist,” in that these were individuals who do not question the concept of “Good English” (672).

In their attempt to re-create their identities, supporters of “Students’ Right” sometimes used an array of terms to define themselves. The terms supporters most often use to describe

themselves were “leftists” and “progressives.” Donald Lazere asserted that leftists were those who supported “open admissions, the open classroom and Freireian liberatory literacy, [and] *Students’ Right to Their Own Language*” (7). As a self-described “leftist,” Lazere saw the contradiction between the leftist association with uplifting the poor and the life of an average leftist. According to Lazere, the average leftist grew up in middle-class, highly educated households. Leftists had access to the academic discourse that allowed them to critique what they saw as an unfair educational system that penalized the poor; many high profile leftists taught (and currently teach) at “elite” institutions—i.e. Ivy League institutions (17-18). His discussion of whom leftists were is important for helping us better understand how certain SRTOL supporters relate SRTOL to various issues within education. It also spoke on behalf of leftists by describing who they were and what they represented.

For example, SRTOL supporter Geneva Smitherman believed that composition specialists who cared about SRTOL and other issues related to language rights needed to “align with political progressives in demanding the restoration of budget cuts from education and other domestic programs and in opposing the military build-up and its gross and offensive budget” (“Towards” 34). While Lazere told readers that leftists were the ones who support SRTOL, Smitherman told readers that supporters of SRTOL needed to be politically involved with “progressives” (“Towards” 34). Progressives, Smitherman implies, should establish political connections with groups interested in improving education and society. Because supporters sought to find ways to uphold and implement SRTOL, they became the rhetorical audience who actively sought to modify the exigencies.

But pro-SRTOL supporters were not the only ones to use labels; anti-SRTOL used labels to define SRTOL supporters as well. David Shores, for example, called SRTOL supporters

“armchair liberals” (9). While Zorn didn’t use a label *per se* his description of SRTOL contained implicit labeling of supporters. Zorn referred to the SRTOL as “the official position statement of the guild of college compositionists on dialect differences, lionized to this day as a first principle of ‘liberatory’ English teaching” (311). Though the word “guild” denotes a “group” or “club” (“Guild,” *Roget’s 21<sup>st</sup> Century Thesaurus*), it also connotes a sense of exclusion or privileging of people—that is “college compositionists.” The fact that he said this group “lionizes” liberatory learning provides sarcastic commentary on what he perceives to be problematic with SRTOL: SRTOL doesn’t liberate students from “underachievement” (326).

### **From Rhetorical Audience to Constraints**

Earlier in the chapter, I noted that Hunsaker and Smith devised three main audiences: situational, actual, and rhetorical. A “[rhetorical] audience must be capable of modifying the exigence positively” (Bitzer, “Functional” 23). Unfortunately for the CCCC, the audience of teachers segmented themselves into affinity groups. In fact, we see this when the audience who rejected SRTOL and the audience who supported SRTOL both use labels to define themselves and their opponents. As discussed earlier in Gee’s “Identity as an Analytic Lens for Research in Education,” an affinity group has an “allegiance to, access to, and participation in specific practices that provide each of the group’s members the requisite experiences” (105). Those in an affinity group may not know each other, but they understand what they like and engage in “specific practices.” For example, supporters of SRTOL write about how to implement the ideas of SRTOL in the classroom. According to Valerie Kinloch, supporters seek to use the “democratic values” of SRTOL to encourage teachers to talk to students about language and its use in various situations (“Revisiting” 90); similarly, Scott Wible points out that SRTOL is a



“heuristic scholars have used and continue to use for inventing ethical and productive responses to linguistic diversity” (469). These examples help illustrate how the rhetorical audience of supporters attempt to address the exigencies inherent within SRTOL.

Not only do those in an affinity group engage in specific practices, but they may engage in labeling, as seen in the discussion of how supporters of SRTOL define themselves. If like-minded individuals who may or may not know each other decide to adopt a label to define themselves, the individuals speak not only on behalf of themselves individually, but also speak on behalf of people who too have adopted the label. We see this in the Lazere discussion of leftists when he describes who leftists are, what they believe in, and why he is a leftist.

Likewise, we see affinity groups labeling their opponents and thus re-presenting who they are. By re-characterizing their opponents, the affinity group has the power to frame the debate by denigrating their opponent. Think about Sledd’s use of the term “conformist” and Shores’s use of the term “armchair liberal.” Both terms were more than just slights against their political opponents. The terms served as a means of defining who their opponents were without taking into account the complexity of their opponents’ belief regarding the support of and opposition to SRTOL. As Joy Moncrieffe notes, labeling “obscures the diversity of interpretations that may be critical for addressing the very problems/cases that the label highlights” (10). Thus, the “conformist” label doesn’t take into consideration the various pedagogical theories that opponents might have in regards to the teaching of writing and the “armchair liberal” label doesn’t take into consideration the various ways supporters of SRTOL conceivably interpret the document.

Hence, an affinity-group’s labeling of opponents constitutes an attempt to speak about others and in an unconventional way, speak on behalf of the opposing group—though clearly

that group would not want the opponent speaking on behalf of them. Yet the label signifies a means of describing and defining the opponents, as my definition (found in chapter one) of “speaking on behalf of others” indicate. Affinity groups who use labels to describe opponents seek to not only define the audience to others, but also to use the label to interpret their opponents’ theories. Therefore when supporters of SRTOL call opponents “traditionalists,” they invite the audience to think of the terms associated with “traditionalists” (a quick thesaurus search came up with the following: “purists”; “conformists”; “fundamentalists”; “conservatives” [“Traditionalist,” *Roget’s 21<sup>st</sup> Century Thesaurus*]), which are not necessarily considered positive, and thus, show that opponents view language (or dialect) from a restrictive and judgmental perspective.

Though she discusses labeling of formal political groups, Rosalind Eyben’s discussion of labeling can apply to what are opposing and supporting affinity camps for SRTOL. She writes that “labeling may shift—or sustain—power relations in ways that trigger social dislocation and prejudice efforts to achieve greater equity” (177). Thus, if the goal of SRTOL is to help teachers find ways of working with students who speak a stigmatized dialect, the labels that affinity groups (within the audience) use to describe their opponents serve as a means of exhibiting power over their opponents, exemplifying the “rituals of speaking” Alcott discusses in her work.

When examining the success of speaking on behalf of others, readers need to consider how the rhetorical audience responds to the group or individual speaking on behalf of them. I consider myself lucky in that the rhetorical audience of teachers has responded robustly to SRTOL and has focused on their agreements and disagreements with the document. This makes it easier to gauge the success (or lack of success) as to how well the CCCC spoke on behalf of others. However, there are other situations in which a rhetor may speak on behalf of the

rhetorical audience, but researchers have no published articles, books, interviews or speeches as to how the audience felt about the way in which the rhetor spoke on behalf of it.

Additionally, rhetors who speak on behalf of a seemingly disfranchised group to a rhetorical audience (consisting of people *not* in the disfranchised group) may find that the rhetorical audience might respond by attempting to address the exigence and by speaking on behalf of themselves or the group in the process of addressing the exigence. Thus, the rhetor begins a chain reaction in which he/she speaks on behalf of someone and the rhetorical audience responds by speaking on behalf of themselves or others.

Interestingly, in the case of SRTOL, individual members of the rhetorical audience of teachers responded to the CCCC by representing and re-presenting themselves, the affinity group who hold their beliefs, and the opposition. In other words, they, like the CCCC committee who created SRTOL, spoke on behalf of others.

In this chapter, I have highlighted how actual audiences have become rhetorical audiences. I showed how the committees that created SRTOL sought to convince the Executive Committee of the importance of the document. By doing this, they were able to get the majority of members on the Executive Committee to become a rhetorical audience. Likewise, I showed how some members of the actual audience of teachers rejected and actually worked to undermine SRTOL and how other members became proponents of SRTOL and thus a rhetorical audience for SRTOL.

But I also implicitly highlighted the constraints within the creation and promotion of SRTOL. One of those constraints dealt with who the audiences were and how the audiences would perceive the document. The fact that the Executive Committee demanded changes in phraseology so as not to offend potential actual audiences exemplifies my point. Another

constraint dealt with the purpose of the document. Questions were raised at the Executive Committee (and even among publications) regarding whether or not SRTOL was supposed to be a teaching guide or policy statement. Perhaps the most important of the constraints dealt with how two audiences—the opponents of SRTOL and supporters of SRTOL—struggled to reconcile their own pedagogical ideas about the purpose of teaching and the functions of teachers.

## Chapter Five: Speaking on Behalf of Others: Constraints

Constraints, as defined by Bitzer, are “made up of persons, events, objects, and relations which are parts of the situation because they have the power to constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence” (“Rhetorical” 8). In this definition, constraints, as a concept, seem like something the rhetor must overcome in order to convince the audience to address an exigence. In this respect, Bitzer’s definition of constraints corresponds to the conceptual definition of constraint found in the 2013 online edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. It defines a constraint as “the exercise or force to determine or confine action” (“Constraint,” def. 1a). Constraints, then, seem like the “things” or the “people” that can prevent or limit an audience from either becoming a rhetorical audience or prevent or limit the rhetorical audience from trying to modify the exigence. Keith Grant-Davie notes that critics normally see constraints as “prescriptions or proscriptions controlling what can be said, or how it can be said, in a given situation” (272). In other words, constraints inhibit rather than free a rhetor when talking to or working with a potential rhetorical audience. But Bitzer notes that constraints can be a positive influence on the rhetor. In his article on functional communication, Bitzer points out that constraints “are capable of influencing the rhetor and an audience” (“Functional” 23). Thus, rhetors use constraints to help them determine how to discuss an exigence when addressing an audience. Unlike the formal definition offered by the *O.E.D.*, Bitzer sees constraints as potentially generative of rhetorical action.

In addition to laying out what constraints are, Bitzer also compartmentalizes constraints into two groups: the artistic proofs internal to the rhetor and the inartistic proofs faced by both the rhetor and the audience (“Rhetorical” 8). The artistic proofs correspond to Aristotle’s pathos, ethos, logos triad and refer to how the rhetor draws upon internal resources to communicate with

the audience. In a sense, then, rhetors always serve as constraints upon themselves because rhetors rely on their communication skills in order to appeal to the audience, and those skills always have limitations as well as advantages. Thus, as their own constraint, rhetors have the potential to positively persuade the audience or even to accidentally alienate the same audience. Additionally, rhetors take into account the inartistic proofs involving other “sources of constraint [which] include beliefs, attitudes, documents, facts, traditions, images, interests, motives, and the like” (“Rhetorical” 8). These inartistic proofs influence how and perhaps why the rhetorical audience responds or does not respond to a given situation. Rhetors need to think about how they use both artistic and inartistic proofs to show the audience how the exigence came into being; why the exigence came into being; why the exigence needs to be addressed; and how the exigence can be addressed.

Constraints, Bitzer makes clear, are necessary for rhetors to utilize. But constraints, from the audience perspective, are also important for it to utilize. After all, it seems that the audience must determine which constraints it needs to consider before becoming a specifically *rhetorical* audience. These determinations center upon how the audience interprets the rhetor’s artistic as well as its own inartistic constraints. As can be seen in this and previous chapters, the audience for SRTOL considered its own pedagogical ideologies and how those ideologies conformed or differed from the pedagogical ideologies inherent within SRTOL before they made a decision to support or oppose the document. These pedagogical ideologies stemmed from the audience’s and the rhetor’s understanding and interpretation of dialect, standard English, and what each saw as the best interest of the students.

One of the more interesting aspects of Bitzer’s discussion is that his definition of constraints reiterates, word-for-word, a key phrase that is used when he earlier defined the

rhetorical situation.<sup>29</sup> The fact that Bitzer uses the phrase, “persons, events, objects, and relations,” a phrase identical to his definition of constraints, may indicate how Bitzer sees the importance or perhaps the primacy of constraints. The “persons” in the rhetorical situation can indicate the rhetor and the audience; the “events,” perhaps, refer to the actual rhetorical situation or various events within the rhetorical situation; the “objects” may refer to tangible documents or items (inartistic proofs) or maybe even goals or ideas; and “relations” might refer to the relationship among the rhetor, audience, exigence, and/or constraints. If readers read “The Rhetorical Situation” closely, when Bitzer discusses the exigence, he gives various examples of it including, but not limited to, environmental pollution and the various exigencies associated with the assassination of John F. Kennedy. When Bitzer discusses rhetorical audience, he emphasizes how certain types of audiences, namely literary and scientific, cannot be rhetorical, thus helping the reader better determine what is a rhetorical audience. And yet when constraints are discussed, Bitzer does not provide concrete illustrations of what he has in mind or imagines.

On the one hand, the reader might conclude that of the three features of the rhetorical situation, constraints might be the most important, especially since the components of constraints are listed within the definition of the rhetorical situation. On the other hand, it might seem that Bitzer minimizes the importance of constraints. As an example, he notes that abolitionist William Lloyd-Garrison “[looked] for an audience and *for constraints*” (“Rhetorical” 12, emphasis mine); likewise, civil rights leaders who cannot “locate compelling constraints and rhetorical audiences” ultimately fail in their rhetorical endeavors to affect change (“Rhetorical” 12). The problem is that in “The Rhetorical Situation,” Bitzer does not specifically discuss what constraints Lloyd-Garrison or civil rights leaders need to employ. This makes it difficult for readers to know or see how rhetors use specific constraints to their advantage. Additionally, it

also makes it difficult to see how constraints inhibit an audience or rhetor from being able to modify the exigence.

Thus, I define constraints as the devices, both inartistic and artistic, that help both rhetors and potential rhetorical audiences make decisions about why and how to positively modify exigencies or actively undermine the modification of exigencies. I will pay particular attention to the artistic and inartistic proofs that make up important constraints within the rhetorical situation surrounding SRTOL, and I will try to identify, concretely, the constraints at work on this particular situation.

### **Artistic Proofs**

Rhetors seeking to convince others to modify an exigence need to consider how they will appeal to their audiences. First, rhetors need to think about the way in which they present themselves and their message. If a rhetor uses enthymemes that the audience doesn't understand or misinterprets, then he or she may lose the audience's attention; if a rhetor shows too much emotion in delivering a message, the audience may perceive him as being "angry" or "crazy"; if a rhetor doesn't show any emotion, an audience might perceive her as being uninterested or passionless about her cause. Interestingly, the range of choices that rhetors make in regards to how they utilize artistic proofs represents a "creative task" rhetors undergo. Writes Bitzer, "The rhetor's central creative task is to discover and make use of proper constraints in his message in order that his response, in conjunction with other constraints operative in the situation, will influence the audience" ("Functional" 23-4). Part of understanding the creative task a rhetor must undergo includes understanding the ideologies that exist within the situational and rhetorical audiences a rhetor encounters. Rhetors, thus, need to think about how they use artistic proofs as



constraints and how their audiences interpret these artistic proofs, since each audience member has to consider such proofs before making a decision to modify the exigence (Patton 45). In this section, I will examine the artistic proofs the CCC utilizes that are manifested in SRTOL and how the CCCC was cognizant of these proofs.

### *Ethos*

In *Rhetoric*, Aristotle notes that ideally audiences should judge the “personal character” of a speaker based on the speaker’s speech, not on the speaker’s reputation. He writes, “This kind of persuasion . . . should be achieved by what the speaker says, not by what people think of his character before he begins to speak” (Book I, Ch. 2). However, famous speakers or writers know that their “personal character” has already been established before they begin a text and also know that they may have to address the preconceived notions (or perhaps hostilities) the audience might have of them. For example, a general audience may be hostile towards Michael Vick doing a speech on the importance of animal rescue or Lance Armstrong doing a speech on the immorality of doping. Both athletes know that they must restore their reputations in order to be taken seriously. Thus, they may find that they have to address their misdeeds in their speeches in order to establish their rhetorical ethos. Interestingly, should both athletes be able to convince the general public that they are now changed men, they will likely find their rhetorical ethos strengthened by having overcome their earlier failings. Ethos, in other words, is not a static or fixed attribute of persons or organizations.

Though the CCCC never had the credibility problem that Vick or Armstrong had, it did reevaluate its own personal character *before* and *during* the creation of SRTOL, thus helping

readers understand the effort the organization put forth to use its reputation as a positive constraint. Allow me to explain by drawing upon a concept introduced in a previous chapter.

Earlier in the dissertation, I focused on the CCCC's I-Identity, the identity related to institutions. I noted that today, the CCCC sees itself as an advocacy organization devoted to helping scholars and teachers in Rhetoric and Composition; thus it fits into Spivak's theory of representation. But I also noted that the organization engages in re-presentation in the way in which it seeks to portray the English professor. How it portrays the English teacher may be influenced by the various affinity groups (A-identity) within the CCCC. The I-Identity of the CCCC and the A-Identities within the CCCC contribute to the ethos—or constraint—of the organization.

During the beginning stages of the creation of SRTOL, the Executive Committee, at its March 1972 meeting, discussed the importance of who should serve on the committee to write (the background statement of) SRTOL. According to the Secretary's Report, two members of the Executive Committee "wanted more representation of minority groups" on the Task Force ("Secretary's Report No. 66" 324). Stephen Parks also notes that discussion centered on having a "larger cross section of the CCCC constituency" (163). These requests probably indicated a level of consciousness among members about how the organization should be represented and how the organization might be perceived.

By having individuals who represented different types of higher educational institutions, the CCCC could show its members that SRTOL had the support of an array of institutions including HBCUs, research and doctoral institutions, and community colleges as well as institutions from various regions of the country. By having minority representation on the Task Force, the CCCC could also stave off accusations that it was an all-white upper middle-class

organization seeking to protect and/or speak for minority dialect speakers or stigmatized white dialect speakers (such as those from Appalachia). If someone wanted to examine the CCCC discussion of minority representation from a cynical perspective, he or she might conclude that the CCCC was engaging in *descriptive representation*—an attempt to use an individual of an historically disfranchised group to “represent” or speak on behalf of the group he or she belongs to (Dovi 729). Suzanne Dovi notes that those who value descriptive representation believe that descriptive representatives can counteract the privileged group’s dominance over the conversations that take place in the sociopolitical, cultural and educational spheres. Thus, descriptive representatives “revitalize democracy” by strengthening institutions that have traditionally excluded the groups they represent (730). To be sure, descriptive representatives are not the same as the “native informants” that Spivak references in “Can the Subaltern Speak?” Native informants may “give voice of the Other” (284) to the sociopolitical elite, but they do not necessarily have to advocate for the group’s behalf. Descriptive representatives, however, seek equality on behalf of their groups traditionally left out of elite institutions.

Dovi emphasizes that descriptive representatives must be accepted by the community to which they belong, and, in turn, they must also accept the community they represent. If the community does not accept the descriptive representative, for example, it is difficult for a descriptive representative to “mobilize a historically disadvantaged group, encouraging the active engagement of the group” (736). Dovi also highlights how Hannah Pitkin, Melissa Williams, and Anne Phillips have criticized the concept of descriptive representation noting that descriptive representatives are not always conscientious about the community to which they belong or represent; moreover the political or institutional organizations engaging in descriptive representation may assume that the individual can automatically speak for the group, though

members of that group seldom make that mistake (730-31). Dovi quotes Anne Phillips: “[If] the presumption is that all women or all black people share the same preferences and goals, this is clearly—and dangerously—erroneous” (qtd. in Dovi 731). In other words, it would probably be in the best interest of the CCCC not to assume that because one African American scholar agrees with SRTOL that all African American scholars and individuals will agree as well.

Nevertheless, it was probably in the best interest of the CCCC to have descriptive representatives contributing to SRTOL. If readers recall, I noted that several scholars, when discussing SRTOL, emphasized the importance of Ernece B. Kelly and her criticism of the CCCC during the 1968 convention. Kelly had criticized the CCCC for not reaching out and supporting African American scholars in Rhetoric and Composition. Kelly says, “Here we meet in a body with just a sprinkling of Black folk: so few that it could be called ‘tokenism,’ but just enough so that the charge of exclusion can’t be leveled. Why aren’t there more Blacks on the panels? Why do Black women far outnumber Black men participating here” (Kelly 107). Kelly’s criticism was a challenge to the CCCC to not only work to increase the presence of African Americans but to also allow African Americans a chance to provide voice to African Americans who were discussed about in panels. In other words, Kelly wanted African Americans to be an integral part of the research conversations that take place at CCCC.

Kelly probably recognized something also emphasized within description representation. Descriptive representatives can introduce viewpoints and topics that may not get the attention from the privileged groups (Dovi 730). Additionally, they can also defend the group from “attacks” or inaccuracies often raised against them by those in the dominant class. Kelly noted that in the beginning of the conference she saw herself as an “English instructor.” However, she became “blacker” as the conference proceeded:

I grew more Black as the Conference proceeded, and as I watched the awful resistance of white participants to the challenges to recognize their biases and to work to defeat them.

I grew blacker as I realized the awful blindspots which prevented some whites here from seeing Blacks as humans who could contribute to a conference or a classroom.

I am tired, very tired of being the object of studies, the ornament in professional or academic groups, the object to the changed, reshaped, made-over.

I feel sure that thousands of Black students would echo these words. (107-08)

Here Kelly presented herself as the descriptive representative for African Americans. As a descriptive representative she not only had the chance to challenge those who were in power, but she also pointed out how the actions of the powerful led to the objectification of African Americans. Notice how Kelly discussed the re-presentation of African Americans. White researchers could “change,” “reshape,” and “makeover” African Americans, especially those who were students. Notice, also, how she spoke for African American students by “echoing” their thoughts and feelings.

Perhaps Marianna Davis and Wallace W. Douglas, the two Executive Committee members who insisted on having minority members in the writing and research of the larger SRTOL document, wanted to make sure that scholars of color, (perhaps African American scholars), had a say in the creation of a document that would most likely affect dialect-speaking students of color. Perhaps they wanted to make sure that scholars of color had an opportunity to contribute to the CCCC in the way that Ernece Kelly advocated. Perhaps they wanted to make sure that the Task Force had not only scholars of color, but also scholars who taught within

various types of colleges, so that the Task Force would better understand how SRTOL affected different types of institutions. The notes from the Secretary's Report did not go into detail about the reasoning for why they wanted this. But we do know that Marianna Davis was a founding member of the CCCC Black Caucus; and, as Keith Gilyard emphasized in his article "African American Contributions to Composition Studies," Davis had helped craft a 1970 resolution "[criticizing] the academic colonization of Black topics" (636).

The person who eventually headed the Task Force was Melvin Butler, an African American linguist who taught at Dillard University in Louisiana. I want to make clear that I'm not saying that the CCCC chose Butler to head this Task Force because he was black. It's clear based on his research and teaching that he had the qualifications to serve as chair. However, we need to consider the dynamics of having a predominately white organization talk about (speak on behalf of) people of color and the way that that could have possibly been received in the public. Would audiences, especially those of color, have perceived this document as a paternalistic document designed for white people to protect minorities? Or even worse—a document designed to justify not teaching linguistically-marked students (especially students of color) standard English? To have an African American head this Task Force could buffer any criticism that the CCCC was an exclusively "white" organization speaking about and on behalf of dialect-speaking (African American) students. In fact, the CCCC commitment to make sure to have African Americans on the Task Force certainly indicated that the voices of African American scholars (and students) were heard.

But the problem is that Melvin Butler died before SRTOL was published. Thus, we are left wondering whether or not Butler would have addressed questions from scholars about the appropriateness of a predominately white college educated organization speaking on behalf of

dialect-speaking students. More pointedly, one wonders if he would have tackled the issue head-on. (Keep in mind that most people discussing SRTOL during its initial publication focused on AAEV speakers.) Interestingly, most of the initial publications of SRTOL did not deal so much with why the CCCC wanted to speak on behalf of students; the focus was on how the CCCC was speaking on behalf of its members and English teachers.

Thus, we see the need for the Executive Committee of the CCCC to focus on what Aristotle might say is the “personal character” of the speaker or rhetor. If we focus on the “personal character” of the organization *outside* of SRTOL, we see that, in this particular rhetorical situation, the CCCC needed to think about the perception of the organization among various groups, especially its African Americans members. Ernece Kelly made them aware of that. Additionally, she made the organization aware that if it were going to discuss issues related to African Americans, it needed to have African Americans as part of the conversation. In this respect, Aristotle’s discussion of ethos can no longer *solely* be defined as the “personal character of the speaker”; rather, the speaker—the CCCC—needs to think about its role as a spokesperson not only for the organization, but for groups the organizations seeks to protect.

But the organization also knew that it had to create a document with which the majority of English teachers, from elementary schools to colleges, would agree. As mentioned earlier, the Executive Committee meetings about the document focused on the perception of how the CCCC would be perceived within the profession. For example, at the April 1973 meeting, “Secretary’s Report No. 68” reported that one Executive Committee member was concerned that an earlier draft of the document “‘played down’ the high school teacher” (338). Another committee member expressed concern about whether English teachers would agree with the definition of standard English as expressed in a draft of SRTOL (338). These conversations showed the

concern the CCCC had about its ethos, especially in consideration of the entirety of the NCTE membership.

The main problem with organizations creating a controversial document like SRTOL is that they tend to ask like-minded members of the organization (or those who are part of the same or similar A-Identity groups) to craft professional documents. As mentioned earlier in the study, those who have a different A-Identity (or affinity identities) may not get a say in the creation of such documents, though they may get to vote for approval or disapproval. Interestingly, it seems that members of the Executive Committee during the creation of SRTOL were part of the A-Identity group related to progressive politics. In fact, Stephen Parks implied that the CCCC recognized the difficulty and controversy of getting Rhetoric and Composition scholars on board in supporting SRTOL (167), which was why the CCCC decided to create the background statement in the first place.

### *Logos*

In his discussion of logos, Aristotle notes that “persuasion is effected through the speech itself when we have proved a truth or an apparent truth by means of persuasive arguments suitable to the case in question” (Book I, Ch. 2). Certainly, part of being able to prove your truth is being able to recognize the best genre to use to prove your case. I’ve already discussed earlier in the dissertation the fact that SRTOL is sometimes referred to as a position statement and sometimes a resolution. What I’m interested in doing in this section is discussing the format of SRTOL and how it helps reveal the apparent truth of the argument the organization seeks to make.



When SRTOL was published in 1974, those who subscribed to the CCC received a special issue dedicated to SRTOL. The issue began with a one-page note from Richard Larson, then chair of the CCCC; in the note, Larson explained the origins of SRTOL. He talked about the controversial nature of the resolution and the need to have a background statement that would not only help readers understand the claims made in the resolution but also help readers locate research materials related to education and linguistics. Within the note, Larson highlighted the resolution by making sure it was bolded. In the last paragraph of the letter, Larson noted that “this perceptive statement . . . has won the praise of many linguists and rhetoricians” (CCCC). After Larson’s note, readers saw a heading *Students’ Right to Their Own Language* with the subtitle: “Introduction.” After the introduction, SRTOL contained a series of italicized questions which were then answered. After the background statement, there was an introductory page discussing the bibliography. In the bibliography, the CCCC made clear for whom SRTOL was created: “Because it [SRTOL] is designed to appeal to a varied audience of teachers with differing interests and preparation, elementary, intermediate, and advanced considerations of socio-linguistic problems surveyed in the statement itself are included” (19). After this page, readers noticed annotations for the research needed to answer the italicized questions within the document.

By contrast, readers who read about SRTOL in the journal, *College English*, did not get to see a note from Richard Larson, nor did they get to see the annotated bibliography accompanying SRTOL. In fact, the first words of SRTOL were as follows: “Committee on CCCC Language Statement” followed by “Students’ Right to Their Own Language.” There is no subtitle labeled: “Introduction,” though *College English* did preserve the question and answer structure of SRTOL.

I point out the physical differences in how SRTOL was initially published to highlight the different ways in which the CCCC's argument within SRTOL is shaped. If we look at SRTOL as a meal, then the introductory note serves as the appetizer; the note helps CCC readers understand and appreciate what is to come; because the introductory note highlights the passage of the resolution at the CCCC meeting in Anaheim, California, it justifies the soundness and substance of the main course, and it whets the appetite of all the many guests seated at the table—members of CCCC of course, but linguists and rhetoricians too. The dessert, the annotated bibliography, emphasizes how SRTOL is informed by research. Thus, the CCCC not only shows that the truths of the document were found in the research, the truths of the document were accepted by CCCC members. It's the kind of dessert that's good for you, in other words.

Though *College English*, like the CCC, presented the entrée—that is, the background statement on SRTOL, *College English* presented no appetizer or dessert. If a reader were not active in the CCCC, he or she might not have any basis for understanding the genesis of SRTOL nor would the reader understand what research was used for formulating the claims made in SRTOL.

What I find most fascinating about SRTOL is the question and answer format it utilized to help explain the exigencies to the rhetorical audiences. Using this method does more than just establish logos. It, in fact, utilizes the concept of stasis, which Alan Gross defines as “a set of questions by means of which we can orient ourselves in situations that call for a persuasive response” (7). Unknowingly, perhaps, the CCCC used the stasis method in order to “prove a truth” (as Aristotle might say). Rhetors who use a stasis format not only anticipate questions that an audience might ask, but also anticipate objections as well. The goal is to use the question and answer format to resolve any potential conflicts that might arise (Carter 98-99).

Writes Sharon Crowley and Debra Hawhee, the stasis method does the following for rhetors:

1. Clarifies their thinking about the point in dispute
2. Forces them to think about the assumptions and values shared by members of their targeted audience
3. Establishes areas in which more research needs to be done
4. Suggests which proofs are crucial to the case
5. Perhaps even points the way toward the most effective arrangement of proofs.

(54)

If we examine how SRTOL was created, we'll see that in "Secretary's Report No. 68," there was discussion about the question and answer format. Executive Committee member Robert Bain suggested that the Task Force, after stating each question, "begin the statement with the definition of the dilemma; then relationship between elementary, high school, and college teachers; then suggested solutions" (339). By suggesting that the stasis be set up in this manner, Bain forced the Task Force to think about how it defined the problems it addressed in SRTOL; encouraged the Task Force to analyze the specific and general experiences that affect English teachers on the primary, secondary, and college levels; and considered the "effective arrangement of proofs." Most importantly, Bain's insistence that the Task Force first consider the "dilemma" of the questions highlighted how crucial the stasis method was in discussing exigencies. According to Grant-Davie, rhetors who use the stasis method for articulating their exigencies can interrogate why a particular discourse is essential and the affect the discourse might have on the audiences (266-68).

The stasis also allowed the Executive Committee to better see how well the Task Force answered the questions posed in SRTOL. Executive Committee members, for example, pointed out that certain questions had not been satisfactorily answered and solutions had not been given. The solution is important within a stasis method. According to Carter, stasis “provides a *direction* for action—toward the resolution of the conflict” (100). Like Grant-Davie, Michael Carter likens stasis to the exigence in Bitzer’s rhetorical situation (110). Just as the exigence provides a motive for the rhetor to address a problem, the stasis provides a method for the rhetor to explain the exigence and thus, convince the rhetorical audience to solve (or positively modify) the exigence.

In the published version of SRTOL, some of the answers to the questions were not set up according to Bain’s suggestions. For one, some questions were so general that they did not require a specific answer for different audiences of English teacher. Examples of these questions include: “What Do We Mean by Dialect?” “Why and How Do Dialects Differ?” and “Why Do Some Dialects Have More Prestige than Others?” For others, some questions were geared primarily towards a specific audience. When the CCCC answered the question, “Does Dialect Affect the Ability to Read?”, it noted that schools and colleges privilege Edited American English in the classroom; however, most of the information discussed was for the primary teacher. For example, the CCCC referenced a “child” or “children” reading. Additionally, examples given in this section related to children’s literature and children’s readers.

In some respects, SRTOL, like the U.S. Constitution, represented the cultural and historical time in which it was produced; but SRTOL also represented a document that could be, and was intended to be, used for future audiences. After all, SRTOL gave an explanation of dialects and the way in which they influenced how we read, write, judge, and think about

language. Like the Constitution, which has been amended throughout the years, an updated SRTOL did come out in 2006. Though the content of what was said remained the same, the bibliography was revised to reflect new research done on education and language. Additionally, the 2006 version no longer used question headings; instead it contained content headings. The new heading entitled “Understanding Language Varieties” replaced the original question headings dealing specifically with dialects; the heading “Language Varieties and Learning” replaced question headings dealing with dialects and their effects on reading, writing, and critical thinking; and the heading “Language Varieties and Educational Policies and Practices” replaced questions dealing with grammar, handbooks, standardized tests, and dialect acceptance among teachers outside of English. Most importantly, question fifteen, “What Sort of Knowledge about the Language Do English Teachers Need?” in the original document was moved to the “Language Varieties and Educational Policies and Practices” section. Instead of ending the updated SRTOL with this profound statement: “Common sense tells us that if people want to understand one another, they will do so. Experience tells us that we can understand any dialect of English after a reasonably brief exposure to it. And humanity tells us that we should allow every man the dignity of his own way of talking,” the updated SRTOL ends with the section entitled “Language Varieties, Linguistic Profiling, Housing, Civil Rights, and Employability.” The last words, thus, emphasize (inadvertently?) the importance and primacy of standard English: “Then students will be in a much stronger position to consider the rhetorical choices that lead to statements written in EAE.”

The changes in the document not only reflected a way of making the document more understandable to today’s audience, but also reflected the constraints that the CCCC encountered after the CCCC voted to approve SRTOL in 1974.

### *Pathos*

Many critics use the terms “emotion” or “emotional” to describe pathos in writing. Aristotle, in fact, notes that “persuasion may come through the hearers, when the speech stirs their emotions” (Book I, Ch. 2). Thus, in oral communication, hearers listen and observe the ways in which speakers use cadences, body language, and the like to appeal emotionally to the hearer. In hortatory texts, such as SRTOL, pathos is important. After all, hortatory discourse, according to Robert E. Longacre, “aims at influencing conduct, that is getting the receivers of the text to do something they are not currently doing, to continue doing something they are already doing, to expend greater effort in an activity already embarked on, to modify the nature of their efforts, and so on” (“Discourse” 109). In other words, hortatory texts are specifically designed to get the readers to modify one or more exigencies. In writing, readers notice how writers emphasize or deemphasize words and phrases through the use of italics, bold lettering, or punctuation marks such as exclamation points or question marks. In both speaking and writing, rhetors may use repetition to reinforce points or to provoke reactions from their audiences.

SRTOL used repetition and pathos to establish the CCCC positions and to convince its audiences of teachers to accept the document and implement the suggestions it advocated. While the document didn’t use the word “I,” it did use the word “we” to not only articulate its positions but to also establish a connection with the audience. In fact, I discussed this connection earlier in the dissertation. What I want to do here is focus briefly on SRTOL’s use of questions and repetition for emotional effect to help highlight pathos and heighten hortatory discourse within SRTOL.

According to Crowley and Hawhee, questions are not only designed to trigger an answer; they can also be designed to arouse, shame, or insult an audience (299). Longacre, in fact, notes that within hortatorical texts, “rhetorical questions may be used to reprimand as well as to teach” (*Grammar* 11). Take for example these series of questions found within the first section of SRTOL:

And many of us have taught as though the function of schools and colleges were to erase differences. Should we, on the one hand, urge creativity and individuality in the arts and the sciences, take pride in the diversity of our historical development, and, on the other hand, try to obliterate all the differences in the way Americans speak and write? Our major emphasis has been on uniformity, in both speech and writing; would we accomplish more, both educationally and ethically, if we shifted that emphasis to precise, effective, and appropriate communication in diverse ways, whatever the dialect? (CCCC 710)

The questions represented an attempt by the CCCC to arouse the audience and make it ponder the contradictions teachers, nay—the CCCC and teachers—had with language and with a sense of justice. Likewise, the questions were designed to reprimand teachers who sought to “obliterate all the [linguistic] differences” students had. If the goal of the first question was to emotionally appeal to the American value of individuality, then the goal of the second question was to emotionally appeal to the American value of justice. According to Walter Davis, researchers have noted that Americans tend to adhere to two sacred values related to the abovementioned passage: individuality and justice: “Historically, the United States has maintained two conflicting views: one elevates individual freedom and choice above every other value, while the other raises justice and the common good above private, individual good” (160). The first question

emphasized the American values of individuality and creativity. The second question emphasized the morality (“ethics”) of teaching. Both questions were designed to make the audience of teachers ponder how far it should adhere to pedagogical principles that ultimately undermine basic American values. The second question, however, was designed to convince teachers to shift their “emphasis to precise, effective, and appropriate communication in diverse ways.”

Throughout SRTOL, the authors used repetition as a means of creating intensity. Though there were some editors and writers who view repetition in writing as negative, Crowley and Hawhee note that repetition can actually be a good rhetorical device to use. Rhetors who use repetition are able to inscribe important images and concepts in the minds of the audience (293). In fact, critics have noted that African American preachers who use repetition (along with other figurative devices) in their sermons are able to engage the audience in call and response, a form of pathos in which the audience responds to the preacher (Britt 217).

Perhaps the most effective use of repetition occurs at the end of the original SRTOL document. Though I’ve discussed these lines before, it is important to reemphasize them:

Common sense tells us that if people want to understand one another they will do so. Experience tells us that we can understand any dialect of English after a reasonably brief exposure to it. And humanity tells us that we should allow every man the dignity of his own way of talking. (726)

Notice that there was a personification of the words “common sense,” “experience,” and “humanity.” These words obviously could not talk, but in this instance they did. They “tell us” important points. The repeated use of the phrase “tell us” called attention to the need for the audience to use common sense, have experiences, and to recognize its humanity. Indeed



repetition invited the audience to link emotionally with the rhetor; after the first two “tell us,” the audience could expect, in some respect, to say “tell us” again.

This invitation to repeat along with the rhetor happened earlier in SRTOL when, in the introduction, the audience was asked to “say with Langston Hughes”:

I play it cool and dig all jive

That’s the reason I stay alive

My motto as I live and learn

Is to dig and be dug in return. (qtd. in CCCC 710).

The CCCC used this example to highlight what the CCCC considered to be “linguistic virtuosity” (710). In this example, Hughes repeated the word “dig” and its variation “dug.” Additionally, the focus was on the word “I”; Hughes used the word “I” in the first three lines of the excerpt. Not surprisingly this passage was found on the same page in which the CCCC issued its question about individuality. In the excerpt, the focus was on the individual’s coolness (or creativity), his goals (“my motto as I live and learn/Is to dig”) and on his hope to be accepted as he was (“to be dug in return”). The use of this passage by Langston Hughes was designed to help the audience understand the appropriateness of students using their linguistic repertoire to express their individuality. By asking the audience to repeat the lines, the CCCC perhaps hoped that its audience of teachers would see and hear the different ways in which a rhetor could express his or her outlook on life.

In his article “Functional Communication,” Bitzer discusses the “evolutions of situations.” In stage one, the constituents within the rhetorical situation come into being. In addition to a rhetor addressing the audience, the rhetor “cultivate[s] an audience” and “generate[s] constraints” (34). In this section, I examined how the CCCC generated constraints

using its own artistic proofs. I paid particular attention to not only how the CCCC originally produced SRTOL, but also how it used ethos, pathos, and logos as constraints to persuade audiences to pay attention to the issues it seeks to address and to hopefully modify the exigencies. In the upcoming section, I will discuss the inartistic proofs and the ways in which the CCCC failed and succeeded in their mission.

### **Inartistic Proofs**

In the section above, I focused on the positive ways in which the CCCC harnessed artistic proofs as constraints to help the organization attract a rhetorical audience to address the exigencies. I discussed how the Executive Committee of the CCCC attempted to seek African American representatives and those from schools outside the research universities; I examined the ways in which the CCCC shaped the document; I noted how the CCCC attempted to emotionally connect to readers. In this section, I will pay attention to the inartistic proofs and how these constraints helped and/or hindered the CCCC.

For this section, I will focus on three main inartistic constraints: one deals with the “climate” of the 1980s and how SRTOL fit into it. The other deals with the people who wish to repeal SRTOL; and the third constitutes a potential constraint: the acceptance or rejection by students and parents of the document.

### *The Climate of the Times: Conservative Depictions of Schooling*

In the sample rhetorical situations that Bitzer discusses, the rhetorical situation seems rather limited in terms of time and scope. For example, Bitzer discusses the assassination of John F. Kennedy, the Gettysburg Address, and the presidential campaign of 1964. These rhetorical

situations, as Bitzer presents them, have a clear beginning and a clear end as events. However, there are some rhetorical situations that endure over time, that constitute “movements” in which there may be debates as to when the movement began and/or when the movement ended.

(Examples about dates regarding disputed movements include the Harlem Renaissance and the Civil Rights Movement.) When there is a movement, J. Robert Cox tells us, there are unique constraints in regards to the goals inherent within the movement. These goals include the “degrees of change” and “explicitness of the movement’s objectives” (Cox 257). Do rhetors want a simple change (policy change) or a reorganization of a societal institution? Do rhetors want to have an explicit definition of goals, objectives, and procedures or do rhetors want to use indirection so as to not scare off potential supporters (Cox 257-59)? Though Cox does a good job of discussing how rhetors within a rhetorical movement encounter and negotiate constraints, he does not discuss what happens when a counter-movement serves as a constraint on a rhetor.

No doubt, many critics such as Stephen Parks, Patrick Bruch and Richard Marback, Valerie Kinloch and others subsume SRTOL as part of the Civil Rights Movement. But many of these same critics also point out that SRTOL experienced a backlash as a result of the conservative educational movement that seemed to intensify during the 1970s and 1980s. Though Geneva Smitherman points to the constraint of the CCCC not providing enough teaching materials to help teachers understand how to develop curriculum on SRTOL, she also concedes that the conservative political climate (in the 1970s and 1980s) made it difficult for the CCCC to address language rights (“Retrospective” 24). One of the major movements going on was the “back to basics movement” which began in earnest during the 1970s. According to Paula Johnson, the back-to-basics movement represented a “return to a mythical childhood where rules were simple, clear, invariant, and prescriptive. Law and order” (18). If we apply this definition to

the mythical college classroom, then it might look like the nineteenth century college composition classroom Johnson described at Harvard University: a classroom where teachers spent their time grading essays for structure, grammar, and spelling; or, it could look like the nineteenth and twentieth century college composition classroom at Yale University: there, teachers taught literature and rhetoric to their first-year students; those freshman, however, whose writing was deemed “awkward” had to take a supplementary course focusing on punctuation, grammar, and spelling (Johnson 19-20); or it could look like the current-traditionalist classroom of the twentieth century: one in which “language must be precise” and “must conform to certain standards of usage, thereby demonstrating the appropriate class affiliation” (Berlin 9). Hence, the “back to basics” movement’s emphasis was not about the elaboration of concepts and ideas in writing; it was about praising or penalizing students for their ability to conform to standard English.

We see this play out in the Merrill Shiels 1975 *Newsweek* article, “Why Johnny Can’t Write.” Shiels asserted that many college students were “unable to write ordinary, expository English with any real degree of structure and lucidity.” Shiels later criticized the CCCC for passing SRTOL and (mis)interpreted it as a document that allowed for teachers to “refuse to teach” standard English. Shiels, however, praised the “Competence” course at Phillips Academy. “Competence” was a required course that stressed “sentence and paragraph construction and elements of style.” The implication was that students needed to understand the “rules” in order to communicate well. According to Shiels, “If the written language is placed at the mercy of every new colloquialism and if every fresh dialect demands and gets equal sway, then we will soon find ourselves back in Babel.” This belief in the preservation of standardized language was

inseparable in the preservation of history and values espoused by conservative critics such as George Will, William Bennett, and Dinesh D'Souza.

While Smitherman does not go into detail about the specifics of what was occurring at the time, Ellen Schrecker notes that in the late 1970s and early 1980s, conservative foundations and philanthropists (such as Coors and Sarah Scaife foundations) donated resources to conservative university student and faculty organizations, as well as to think tanks such as the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation. The goal of these organizations was to push back against what conservatives saw as the “radical domination of the academy” (78-80). These organizations played an influential role in shaping mainstream discussions about university education and what should be emphasized.

One of the ways in which these individuals and organizations did this was through the promotion of pro-Western “traditional” values. David Bromwich highlights conservative commentator George Will’s influence on mainstream culture and Will’s belief that the 1980s’ politically correct notion of “tolerance” needed to be supplanted by “a core consensus of the Western political tradition as first defined by Aristotle, and added to by [Edmund] Burke and others” (qtd. in Bromwich 63). Promoting his ideas through his newspaper columns and books, Will not only found supporters within political circles, but he also found supporters within academia. One of the more enthusiastic supporters was William Bennett, who served as Secretary of Education during the Reagan administration.

Bennett, in fact, believed that the humanities needed to adopt a “core curriculum” that would encourage college students to study “great books” and encourage teachers to “transmit” civilization and culture to their students (Bromwich 83-85). Bromwich points out that Bennett and his “study group” who helped him develop his 1984 pamphlet, “To Reclaim a Legacy,”

believed that university professors were using the humanities to discuss subjectivity and relativism, but not the “value of historical facts, empirical evidence, or even rationality itself” (qtd. in Bromwich 87). In the pamphlet, Bennett asserts that “the study of the humanities and Western civilization must take its place at the heart of the college curriculum” (4). He advocated for E.D. Hirsch’s “cultural literacy” paradigm, which posited that everyone should “possess the basic information needed to thrive in the modern world” (Hirsch xiii). That information included understanding the rhetorical significance of the “sign of the cross,” but not understanding the rhetorical significance of signifying, which might be needed for politicians, educators, community and religious leaders to communicate with those living within some African American communities.

Though Bennett emphasized the diversity of higher education and the importance that higher educational institutions determine “what [they] consider an educated person to be and what knowledge that person should possess,” he also asserted that “some things are more important to know than others” (10). He then listed what they were: “A careful reading of several masterworks of English, American and European Literature” and “a deeper understanding of a single non-Western culture than a superficial taste of many” (13). Out of all the works and authors Bennett thought college students should read, only one person of color was on that list: Martin Luther King, Jr. (16).

In his speeches, Bennett criticized teachers and students who challenged authority and government. Bromwich quotes him as saying that “campus radicals” sought to “frustrate the government, discredit authority and promote a radical transformation of society” (qtd. in Bromwich 89). Like Will, Bennett romanticized Greco-Roman culture and the traditions of Western Europe. According to John K. Wilson, Stanford University, in 1988, decided to revise

its curriculum requirement so that students would not have to take its “Western Culture” course; instead students would take “Cultures, Ideas, and Values,” a course that emphasized both Western and non-Western history. Not recognizing that the new course still emphasized Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian texts, Bennett, nonetheless, accused Stanford of “trashing Western culture” (qtd. in Wilson 64). Other critics of the course believed that the goal of “Cultures, Ideas, and Values” was to “impose [discussions about] race, class, and gender on students” (Wilson 68). One critic, Dinesh D’Souza, attacked one text used in the course, *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, and claimed that Menchú was “a mouthpiece for a sophisticated neo-Marxist critique of Western society” (qtd. in Wilson 70). (This, of course, is interesting in that he is claiming that Menchú is speaking on behalf of others.) D’Souza then went on to make a gross generalization about minorities: “Like Rigoberta Menchú, they tend to see their lives collectively as a historical melodrama involving the forces of good and evil, in which they are cast as secular saints and martyrs” (qtd. in Wilson 71). D’Souza, thus, used Menchú’s work to condemn the way in which race was discussed and historicized in the academy and within mainstream media. If we are to believe that Wilson has not taken D’Souza’s work out of context, then we can conclude that when D’Souza spoke about minorities, he essentialized them and assumed that minorities saw their experiences within binaries: good and evil and oppressor and oppressed. In fact, in a 1998 article on Menchú, D’Souza asserted an uneducated peasant such as Menchú would not know how to use Marxist terminology, and thus cast doubt on the authenticity of Menchú’s autobiography (“Liar”). The irony, of course, was that he implicitly assumed that a poor person could not learn the language of an educated class, something that poor people in the United States (and indeed around the world) could then and now do.

If it is true, as Geneva Smitherman implies, that the CCCC felt afraid to promote SRTOL, it certainly seems feasible to come to the conclusion that the conservative political climate of the 1970s and 1980s served as a constraint. After all, SRTOL seems to challenge the prevailing notion of what constitutes “correctness” within written and spoken language by emphasizing the plurality of dialects within the United States. Moreover, it encourages teachers and educational institutions to expand the core curriculum related to English by allowing students to practice “linguistic versatility” in the ways that writers such as John O. Killens, Langston Hughes, and others have done (CCCC 719). Likewise, SRTOL promotes “tolerance” of other cultures and the values that these cultures have in regards to their linguistic practices. Most importantly, SRTOL acknowledges the importance of sociolinguistics—a field of linguistics that examines cultural perceptions of language and language speakers; in other words, the field interrogates issues related to race and gender, which some conservatives might interpret as “imposition” on college students.

The effects of such an intimidating climate were manifested in a number of different ways. According to Smitherman, this climate possibly contributed to the CCCC’s decision to renege on the teacher resource book (“Retrospective” 24). It is not too hard to imagine that the CCCC would be fearful of damaging its reputation by releasing a teacher resource book that would no doubt address issues regarding language, ethnicity, and economics (how can one discuss AAEV, Chicano English, Appalachian English, etc., without doing so?) and provide activities and assignments that might seem like a rejection of the “back to basics movement.” To release this book might have left the organization vulnerable to mainstream attacks that it was *not* encouraging teachers to teach standard English. Remember, critics such as J. Mitchell Morse and William Pixton had already accused the CCCC of this anyway. According to Smitherman,



the CCCC “reluctantly decided” against publication (qtd. in Smitherman “Retrospective” 24) and did so when the political climate was becoming more conservative. The fact that the book was rejected in the late 1970s around the time that the “back to basics movement” and the *Newsweek* article held sway (over mainstream opinion) is telling. Similarly telling is the fact that the CCCC and NCTE did not try to create a specific SRTOL teacher resource guide during the 1980s at a time when Will, Bennett, and D’Souza promoted Western values at the expense of other cultural values and understandings.

In a possible move to not make this resource available, was the CCCC trying to anticipate a debate in which others, including those within the organization, would speak *about* the organization in ways that would risk embarrassment? After all, there were members of the CCCC advocating the rescinding of the document. How could the organization, through SRTOL, advocate or speak for its members or teachers in general if the members of the organization were opposed to the basic premise of SRTOL? How could it re-present the English teacher as someone committed to understand various cultures, linguistic traditions, et cetera, if English teachers such as William Pixton and J. Mitchell Morse, were presenting alternate versions of the English teachers? How could it represent—that is, speak for—students when its own members did not hold the same views that are contained within SRTOL? These questions are complex and difficult to answer. Smitherman, who served on the committee that was to create the teacher’s resource guide, seems to indicate that the CCCC did not give an explanation for its refusal to publish the book.

In my attempt to understand the constraint of a conservative atmosphere that existed within the rhetorical situation, I cannot help but wonder why the CCCC refused to publish its teachers’ resource book. As an outsider, I rely on Smitherman’s insider perspective regarding the

conservative political atmosphere. Still, from each of our perspective accounts, we are speaking about the organization as if we understand what *might* have informed the CCCC's decision. As Alcoff reminds us, speaking about others can be dangerous. And the danger I confront is the same danger that all of us who theorize and hypothesize about others' actions confront: we might be wrong. To minimize the possibility of being incorrect, I support my claims with research and with the testimony of what those present at SRTOL's inception, such as Smitherman, have to tell us. Knowing that I might be wrong, I qualify my claims with certain key words/phrases such as "I imagine" or "In a possible move" or "If it is true" to indicate my uncertainty.

The problem, of course, is that there are writers and writing teachers who see phrases such as these as problematic. Why? Because those phrases such as "I believe," "I think," and "I feel" are often viewed by writers and editors as ineffective and weak. A cursory look at writing blogs and writing Web sites explains why. In *Precise Edit's Blog*, the editor writes that phrases such as "I think," "I feel," et cetera, show a writer's "insecurity" and "delay the writer's message." The Writing Center Web site at the University of North Carolina says that using the phrases "I think," "I feel," and "I believe" are "less effective" forms of first person; and the *Online Writing Lab* at Aims Community College asserts that the "I think" and "I believe" phrases are "better written in the third person."

However, these phrases make it clear that the writer is speaking for himself, not for a group of people. Writers who use these phrases recognize the same thing that Bosavi recognized: sometimes it is best not to "speak others' thoughts," unless it's clear that one is doing so—and doing so carefully (Schieffelin 435). Yet for this dissertation, I do not feel it is right to simply say that Geneva Smitherman points to a conservative atmosphere without explaining what that entails.

Interestingly, Stephen Parks quotes Elisabeth McPherson as saying that the reason why the book was never published was “because of the illness of Geneva Smitherman, co-editor, and the lack of enough high quality submissions” (qtd. in Parks 210). Smitherman, however, never indicates these issues as reasons for not publishing the book. Smitherman, in fact, calls the materials “excellent” and never references her illness. In fact, she mentions serving on the committee, but does not call herself “co-editor” of the publication, a term McPherson gives to her. As we can see, there are two interpretations of a particular situation in which I have to negotiate between how to “speak others’ thoughts” and re-present them correctly.

The important thing to note, however, is that others, besides Smitherman, have discussed the conservative political atmosphere and its effect on the acceptance of SRTOL. Stephen Parks, for example, believes that “the left in the CCCC” did not “articulate a strong response to the emerging cultural shifts” occurring during the time (208). He notes that the right within the CCCC was using its ideology as a means of rescinding the document. Parks points to the use of certain phrases such as “legitimacy” and “moral choice” as terms the right within the CCCC coopted from the left to justify its actions against SRTOL (213-14).

### *Repealing or Rescinding SRTOL*

This, of course, brings me to the second constraint: the nonacceptance of SRTOL by CCCC members and subsequent repeated attempts to amend or repeal SRTOL. According to Campbell and Huxman, rhetors who succeed in convincing an audience to make a change, must include the audience throughout the rhetorical act (188). If the rhetor cannot earn the audience’s trust and convince the audience to address the exigencies, then the rhetor will have difficulty speaking on behalf of an audience that is hostile to the rhetor’s goals.

One of the major problems with Bitzer's theory is that he does not take into consideration the hierarchical dynamics of rhetor and audience. According to Molefi Kete Asante and Deborah F. Atwater, Bitzer assumes that the rhetor and audience are on an equal playing field. The rhetorical situation, they argue, needs to take into consideration the rhetorical condition, which they define as "the structure, power pattern, assumed or imposed, during a rhetorical situation by the communicators" (171). In order to understand the rhetorical situation, we need to understand who gets to control the discourse and how the individual or people do so. For example, many rhetors within a rhetorical situation will issue one or more commands or suggestions. These commands may be implicit or explicit, indirect or straightforward (171-72).

Individuals who accept the rhetor's message may do so because they feel the rhetor possesses more knowledge than they do and thus the audience may give the rhetor a certain authority. However, there are times when an audience may choose not to defer to the rhetor. For example, a Catholic who is pro-choice may choose to reject the discourse of an anti-abortion priest, though the priest holds a higher position of authority than a Catholic layperson (Asante and Atwater 173-174). However, if the Catholic priest or any other rhetor wants to control the rhetorical condition, three occurrences must occur: the rhetor must have "control over the rhetorical territory through definition, [must establish] . . . a self-perpetuating initiation *rite de passage*, and . . . [must stifle] . . . opposing discourse" (Asante and Atwater 174). To understand why people wanted to repeal SRTOL, we need to understand how they interpreted how the CCCC created and passed SRTOL.

In the "Bait/Rebait" debate published in the *English Journal* in 1980, C. Lamar Thompson and Juanita V. Williamson reminded readers that at "the 1973 4C's meeting in New Orleans, dissatisfaction about the resolution was voiced by many members. The next year in

Anaheim it was voted on by a ridiculously small number of the membership” (11). Notice that the authors used both general and specific terms to describe SRTOL’s acceptability by the CCCC: “many members” voiced dissatisfaction; a “ridiculously small number” of people voted to support the document. Instead of providing facts to support their claims, they used generalizations to show that SRTOL was a document that did not speak for the membership of the organization. Most importantly, they criticized the *rite de passage* regarding SRTOL.

According to Asante and Atwater, the *rite de passage* is a “self-perpetuating ritual where the truth in effect is reserved for those who are initiated” (174). The authors make clear that the audience is also a part of the initiating process. In their example of *rite de passage*, the authors point to conventions where audience members are acknowledged and allowed to speak about a specific issue. They note that within this process, those who get to acknowledge the audience members also have the power to determine how long the audience members can talk, have the power to steer the direction of the conversations, and have the power to focus attention on specific audience members (Assante and Atwater 174-75). When Thompson and Williamson discussed the CCCC’s meeting in New Orleans, they emphasized “the dissatisfaction” among participants regarding SRTOL. It was as if they were implying that the CCCC decided that it would ignore its members who opposed SRTOL in favor of a “ridiculously small” group of people who voted for SRTOL the next year.

Yet opponents of the document had been allowed to voice their concerns at the CCCC meetings and in journals read by members of NCTE and CCCC. One of the members who spoke vehemently against SRTOL was William H. Pixton. In his article, “A Contemporary Dilemma: The Question of Standard English,” Pixton stated that the intention of “this paper [is] to encourage the CCCC membership to reject this resolution” (247). He interpreted the document as

justification to not teach standard English in college (247). He further criticized the document in his 1975 “An Open Letter of Congratulation to the NCTE for the 1974 Resolutions.” He questioned if the resolution fulfilled or exemplified the “best interest of NCTE objectives” (93). While he did not mention the CCCC as author of the text, he did intimate that the general public would criticize the document and have a negative opinion of NCTE: “The problem here, of course, is that if enough truly educated people find out what is going on in the schools, then we devotees of NCTE are likely to be thrown out of our jobs” (“Open” 93). In other words, if the NCTE didn’t fulfill its educational obligations to teach standard English to students, English teachers would be the ones sacrificed. (This is especially true for primary and secondary English teachers who may live in states where they do not have tenure or unions and are penalized if they introduce pedagogical materials not approved by their school districts.) By not crediting CCCC as author, he gave authorship to NCTE. By pointing out the NCTE members would look bad to the general public, he, in effect, questioned how well NCTE could speak for its members.

Pixton was not the only one who called for the rescinding of the document. James Sledd published “In Defense of Students’ Right” after he discovered that his friend Louie Crew “had been appointed ‘to a CCCC Committee charged to report whether the CCCC needs to revise ‘The Students’ Right to Their Own Language’” (667). This committee, called the Committee on the Advisability of a New Language Statement for the 1980s and 1990s, was formed in 1981 and was a response to SRTOL (Parks 210-11). The committee seemed to have come to the conclusion that “SRTOL had failed to create an intergenerational alliance among teachers” (Parks 215); had failed to recognize that teachers were more conservative (pedagogically) than the committee that created the document; and that SRTOL failed to take into account state and local educational requirements and mandates. As information about the committee spread, Sledd,

Crew, and the newly formed Progressive Composition Caucus began pressuring CCCC and committee members to keep SRTOL as is (Parks 215-23). In the end, the committee suggested a reaffirmation of the statement, though it acknowledged that SRTOL was subjected to criticism “with respect to its style, its logic, and its inadequate reliance upon insights available in the research of American dialectologists, sociolinguistics, and linguistic anthropologists” (qtd. in Parks 222).

According to Smitherman, NCTE, like some members of CCCC, wanted to distance itself from the document so that people would not view SRTOL as an NCTE document. This shows that the CCCC did not do a good job of speaking for all English teachers, especially since NCTE decided to “pass a weaker version of the CCCC’s ‘Students’ Right to Their Own Language’” (“Retrospective” 22). If we take Smitherman’s word for it, when it comes to defending students and their dialects, NCTE’s document is less explicit and perhaps more indirect than SRTOL.

One of the interesting things about SRTOL is that the CCCC did not initially seem to actively suppress opposition to SRTOL. According to Asante and Atwater, rhetors will sometimes attempt to silence or restrain their opponents within a rhetorical condition (175). The CCCC allowed for articles and editorials against SRTOL to be published in its journals; it even created a committee to ascertain the effectiveness and usefulness of the document. However, as James Sledd showed, there seemed to have been a lack of transparency regarding the committee; nevertheless, the committee came to some conclusions that are important when discussing how one speaks on behalf of others: Was the Task Force politically on the same page as the people for whom they spoke? The committee seemed to have said no. Was the Task Force able to speak on behalf of a diverse group of people? According to the committee, the answer was no. Was the

Task Force able to consider the vast educational dictates under which teachers operated?

According to the committee, the answer was no.

*Acceptability of SRTOL among Students and Parents*

One of the possible constraints not necessarily explored in articles and books about SRTOL deals with whether or not SRTOL would be acceptable to the group of people whom SRTOL protects: students. Related to that constraint is whether or not SRTOL would have been acceptable to the parents, which many readers should assume would want to exercise a say in the way in which their children are educated.

Early articles point to the SRTOL as a document geared solely towards African American students. Permit me to reemphasize some quotes I introduced earlier in the dissertation:

Clearly, the statement of the CCCC has important implications today for the education of black children who are desperately floundering in an educational system that unfortunately has been for them alienating, constricting, irrelevant, and uncompromising (Baxtor 677).

Many of our African-American students would quickly agree with the Language Statement of CCCC and the thinking of the members of the socio-politico-linguistic camp. They all seem to feel that if they can do the job, then it should not matter how they speak (Fitts 6).

Black students who hear about “The Students’ Right to Their Own Language” may respond by asking what new shuck and jive this is. Whatever the resolution’s



intentions are, these students suspect that they're being hustled, denied the same prescriptive help that elevated some of us above otherwise predictable lower-class futures. (Miller 13).

These quotes point to the assumption that not only can these individuals speak on behalf of African American students, but that they can also articulate the experiences of African American students within the educational system. From these statements, African American students are represented as students who struggle academically; they either insist on speaking AAEV or insist on learning standard English. Moreover, there is no indication of students possessing double-consciousness—that is, the understanding of how African Americans are perceived by both whites and blacks. The complexity of not only how African Americans view AAEV, but how they use AAEV within different rhetorical situations is lost within these articles.

In fact, Lisa Delpit, in her work *Other People's Children*, points out that some dialect speaking students and their parents may prefer teachers who emphasize standard English for the following reasons:

First, they know that members of society need access to dominant discourses to (legally) have access to economic power. Second, they know that such discourses can be and have been acquired in classrooms because they know individuals who have done so. And third, and most significant to the point I wish to make now, they know that individuals have the ability to transform dominant discourses for liberatory purposes—to engage in what Henry Louis Gates calls “changing the joke and slipping the yoke,” that is, using European philosophical and critical standards to challenge the tenets of European belief systems. (Delpit 162)

Delpit does not explicitly discuss SRTOL and how students or parents relate to the document. Thus, some may even ask, how can nonacceptance of a document be considered a constraint if the groups in question do not know about the document? I assert that there is ample evidence to show that there would be some students and parents who would have had problems with the document, especially if we examine issues related to SRTOL: the Ann Arbor case of 1978 and the Oakland “Ebonics” debate of 1997.

Before I examine these two cases, it is worth noticing that there has been considerable research done on how African Americans feel about AAEV dialect. For example, in a 1992 study, Speicher and McMahon interviewed sixteen African American college students, professors, and staff members at a Catholic university in the Midwest about their perception of Black English Vernacular (BEV), the term used in the article. According to the article, the participants “do not represent African Americans in general or middle class African Americans. They represent themselves, their own voices and experiences” (388). Their study showed that some participants exhibited negative feelings towards the dialect: one participant described BEV as “idiotic” and a “ghetto language.” One half described the dialect as “slang”; three refused to give a name to the dialect, and some used the more technical terms, “Afro American English,” “Black English,” and “Black English Vernacular” (qtd. in Speicher and McMahon 389).

Moreover, half of those studied expressed concern over the affiliation of the dialect to African Americans. Some participants pointed out that they knew whites and Latinos who grew up in predominately black communities and subsequently spoke BEV. Two felt that the dialect should not be attributed to race; one even suggested that the linguistic study itself represented a “strange place where people were preoccupied with race and finding ways to trap those preoccupations with language” (qtd. in Speicher and McMahon 390). Most importantly, half of

the respondents felt the knowledge and fluency of BEV was unnecessary for African Americans. After all, some African Americans did not live or work in communities where it was spoken. One respondent went so far as to say, “I think it’s [BEV] a disadvantage. Because, like with my children, I do not allow them to speak that type of language, the slang, the dialect. I don’t like that and I don’t like for them to speak that” (qtd. in Speicher and McMahon 399-400).

This belief that children, especially African American children, should not learn or be encouraged to speak a dialect was echoed by Milton Baxter. In his article, he notes that African American parents may not embrace the principles of SRTOL because a) some parents see AAEV as an inferior dialect; and b) some parents want their children to be rid of AAEV since, to them, it represents a subordinate socioeconomic class (679-80). The idea that parents would disapprove of the document that was supposedly designed to help their children can certainly serve as a constraint.

In fact, the anger that some parents feel about the explicit teaching of AAEV or another dialect has manifested itself in various situations, most notably the Ann Arbor decision of 1979 and the Ebonics debate of 1996. As discussed in the introduction, some African American parents sued Martin Luther King, Jr., Elementary School (in Ann Arbor, Michigan) because their children had been or were about to be placed in special education courses. In court, the parents proved that because their children spoke AAEV, the teachers and administrators wrongly assumed that the students were intellectually deficient. The judge, Charles W. Joiner, ordered that teachers and administrators undergo training that would help them understand AAEV and how to work with students who used AAEV. Because of the case, the African American media explored whether AAEV should be explicitly taught in school. George Todd of the *New York Amsterdam News* recounted a parent, who, upon hearing about the case, declared, “I don’t want

my children to learn any Black language. It's ridiculous!" (qtd. in Todd 13). A principle at a high school in New York told George Todd that he would not allow anyone to "institutionalize Black English" at his school (13).

Lu Palmer of *Chicago Metro News* wrote of the various misunderstandings African American parents and others had about the case and the ruling. He said that some parents, notably middle-class African American parents, assumed that the judge demanded teachers to teach AAEV. Moreover, he emphasized, parents believed that by teaching AAEV, students would find themselves "at a disadvantage in their learning experience" (3). He then went on to defend the ruling by writing words that could be construed as being supportive of SRTOL: "Many teachers ridicule Black children for the way they talk not taking into account the fact that this is the way they have learned to talk from birth and there is a cultural legitimacy for this variant of the English language" (3). His statement is reminiscent of SRTOL's declaration that people need to recognize America's "diverse heritage," (CCCC 711) especially as represented by dialects and that teachers need to explore if their rejection of a student's dialect is also a rejection of a student's racial or cultural heritage (CCCC 710).

One of the strongest critics of the Ann Arbor case was Benjamin L. Hooks, who was head of the NAACP during the time of the ruling. In a 1979 opinion piece published by *Chicago Metro News*, he never mentioned the fact that the parents sued the school because their children were being mislabeled as learning disabled or that dialect speaking students were systematically being placed in lower-level classes. Instead he asserted that the children (not the parents) were suing because they wanted to "impose Black English on the system" (7). He then went on to say, "The effort to require Black English in public schools is a sin and a crime that should be condemned in no uncertain language" (7). Like the middle-class parents in Lu Palmer's piece,

Hooks feared that the study of Black English would legitimize a dialect that he described as damaging. However, he also seemed to recognize that teachers needed formal preparation to work with multicultural and presumably multidialectical students.

This type of teaching preparation was not only encouraged by SRTOL but also by Judge Joiner who ruled that teachers and administrators needed to have training to work with multidialectical students. In fact, if we examine the Ebonics debate, we'll see that the Oakland County School Board was not only interested in helping students learn standard English, but also helping teachers receive the training they needed to work with students.

In a 1996 Oakland Unified School District in California decided to address the low verbal and written standardized tests scores of its African American students. Theorizing that the students' low scores were the result of not mastering standard English, the school district passed a resolution, known commonly as the "Ebonics resolution," which called for the teaching of standard English through the use of Ebonics or African Language System. However, because the school district called for the recognition of Ebonics and insisted that Ebonics be utilized for the teaching of standard English, it did what Benjamin Hooks feared: it legitimized Black English via the term Ebonics.

The controversy regarding this resolution was swift. Like the Ann Arbor decision, many misconceptions about the Ebonics resolution became accepted as truth. According to Cheryl D. Fields, some people assumed that the school district did not want to teach standard English, but instead wanted to teach Ebonics ("Ebonics"). Others assumed that the students could not and did not wish to learn standard English. According to Teresa Perry, media commentators openly wondered why African Americans could not master standard English if other groups could (Perry 11). The school board resolution unintentionally served as a means for Americans to

speak about and for African American students and AAEV speakers. Some sought to re-present them, taking note of how African Americans spoke; others, such as the school board, sought to represent them by advocating for better educational services that would help.

It is important to note that some African American students, both in and outside of Oakland, did not like the way in which the Oakland school districted re-presented students. Aaron Andrews, a student in Oakland, told a *New York Times* reporter, “I’m black, I speak English. What they’re trying to say is that we don’t talk proper English. That’s not true” (qtd. in “Black” L8). Erica Allen, a student in Tampa, Florida declared, “I was, and still am, appalled to a certain degree about this notion that we (blacks) speak a different language” (qtd. in Riddick 1). These individuals responded to the way in which the school board not only spoke on behalf of African American students in Oakland, but also students outside of Oakland. After all the first line of the resolution read: “Whereas, numerous validated scholarly studies demonstrate that African American students as part of their culture and history as African people possess and utilize a language described in various scholarly approaches as ‘Ebonics’ (literally Black sounds) or Pan African Communication Behaviors or African Language Systems” (qtd. in Perry and Delpit 143). As Fields noted, the resolution did not seem to acknowledge African American students who were fluent in standard English or African Americans who were successful at code-switching (“Ebonics”). In other words, in the school board’s attempt to re-present African American students, the school board did not take into consideration the diversity of African American students in Oakland (and perhaps beyond).

I recognize that my decision to discuss a *possible* constraint is a controversial one. My assumptions, after all, constitute a form of speaking on behalf of others. I am speculating on how an entire group of people might respond to SRTOL by discussing how that group reacted to two

different and unique cases. These responses represent just some of the beliefs within the African American community. However, there are other beliefs too. For example, Theresa Perry pointed out that there were “African Americans who strongly supported the Oakland resolution and yet equivocated, wondering if this was a conversation that African Americans could have productively in public” (11). This idea is important in that it shows that researchers, in their attempt to speak on behalf of a group, may not be able to do so because of the refusal of individuals within a group to discuss issues with them or within the public sphere.

The reality is that I do not know for sure about how the CCCC might have marketed or promoted SRTOL to the general public. As I mentioned earlier, the Task Force and the Executive Committee did consider creating and releasing a different version of SRTOL designed for the general public. I do not know how they would have framed the document and whether they would have addressed issues (e.g. English Standard schools) not discussed in the official SRTOL. What I do know is that many individuals or organizations who speak on behalf of others should think about how the individuals or groups might respond to them. This is a necessary constraint that can help rhetors shape their text.

Obviously, the CCCC’s SRTOL was produced before the Ann Arbor and Ebonics cases. However, these cases are important because they show that not every African American student or parent was supportive of the Ann Arbor decision and the Oakland School Board. And if they were not supportive of these two incidences, it is also probable that if they had heard of SRTOL, they may not have been supportive as well. In fact, they might have believed what the opponents of SRTOL believed: SRTOL does not advocate the teaching of standard English.

### **SRTOL: Gauging the Success of the Document**

Though it might come across that SRTOL is an unsuccessful document, we need to gauge the success of the document by not only understanding how popular the document is among educators, but also how the document informed, or continues to inform, educational practices. While I am interested in examining these issues, the problem is that we don't have updated in-depth studies on the acceptance of the document and how widespread the document is used in the classroom or within the educational system (as a means of determining policy, for example). Earlier in the dissertation, I pointed to two studies which examined how people in the fields of English and Rhetoric and Composition felt about the document as a whole and sentiments within the document. Terry Lynn Irons' study published in 1993 examined acceptance of the principles of SRTOL at three unnamed institutions. Irons designed a questionnaire that asked respondents, both professors and students, to rate whether they agreed or disagreed with excerpted statements from SRTOL. He then asked them questions related to their attitudes regarding standard English, teaching, and their use of dialect. His study found that the longer a student stayed in school, the less tolerant he or she was of dialect used in academic writing (65). Additionally, he found that fifty nine percent of instructors disputed the statement: "The claim that one variety of language is unacceptable leads to false advice for speakers and writers" (64). About forty percent of instructors disagreed with the idea that "teachers must have the experience and training that will enable them to respect linguistic diversity" (64).

Elaine Richardson's study published in 2003 examined the Language Knowledge and Awareness Survey, which showed that 60.9 % of CCCC and NCTE members who had taught for fifteen or more years were not aware of SRTOL; and 76.8% of teachers who taught from one to six years were not aware of SRTOL. Among those who knew about SRTOL, 67.9% of respondents were supportive of it (58-60). Though the lack of awareness about SRTOL may



seem like failure, keep in mind that most of the articles published within the first ten years of SRTOL were primarily critical of the document; very few provided information on how to use SRTOL in teaching; it has only been recently that books and articles such as Jerrie Cobb Scott, Dolores Y. Straker, and Laurie Katz's *Affirming Students' Right to Their Own Language* and Valerie Felita Kinloch's "Revisiting the Promise of *Students' Right to Their Own Language: Pedagogical Strategies*" have provided teachers with strategies on how to use SRTOL in teaching.

The CCCC has certainly done a better job of addressing the criticism regarding SRTOL. I mentioned earlier in the study the differences between the updated version of SRTOL and the earlier versions. Though the content remains the same, the organizational structure makes it easier for readers to understand the main points of the document. Additionally, the CCCC updated its annotated bibliography so that readers can access more up-to-date information on linguistics and pedagogy.

Most importantly, critics have begun examining how SRTOL affects students besides African Americans. In the Scott, Straker, and Katz book, there is information on how SRTOL relates to indigenous speakers of American Indian and Hawaiian Pidgin (or Creole) languages. Bruch and Marback's *The Hope and the Legacy* as well as *Affirming Students' Right* provides information on how multilingual societies outside of the United States work with multilingual and multidialectal students in the classroom. And lastly, the conservative movement of the 1980s has given way to a more progressive movement today in which teachers and school districts have become more aware and more vocal about the problems with regards to the high-stakes standardized testing (No Child Left Behind) that penalize students who don't speak standard English or who are second language learners. According to John Baugh and Aaron

Welborn, opponents of No Child Left Behind and equivalency programs point out that entire schools are penalized if they have students who have intellectual disabilities, are second language learners, come from low-income families and are multiracial. This is because each school must gauge the progress of students who come from various ethnic, economic, language, and disability group. If a school has a student who is a second-language learner, poor and Asian and the student doesn't score well on the tests, the person's score affects every group listed. To do well on the tests, every student must be proficient in standard English. Regrettably, No Child Left Behind doesn't provide the adequate teacher training and resources needed to help teachers and students (45-47). SRTOL, however, provides a reference point in which to discuss these issues regarding standardized testing, dialect, and pedagogy.

It is my hope that by studying SRTOL, readers will understand not only the historical importance of SRTOL, but also the underreported rhetorical importance of the document, namely the way in which the Task Force which created SRTOL spoke on behalf of others and how people reacted to it. By explicitly showing how SRTOL spoke on behalf of others, I seek to highlight how researchers can contemplate the ways in which they speak on behalf of others and the politics involved in doing so. Of course, one way to contemplate this rhetorical issue is to make oneself aware of the issue. When researchers are aware of how they speak for and speak about others, researchers can then think of how they re-present the individual or the group for whom they speak.

In the conclusion, I will briefly discuss the implications for researchers who do not take into consideration how they speak on behalf of others and will provide information on how researchers can make themselves more aware of this rhetorical process. I do this by showing first how many researchers learned to speak on behalf of others in the classroom, and secondly

demonstrating through the use of a classroom exercise, how researchers can make themselves more aware of when they are engaging in this rhetorical practice.

### **Conclusion: Pedagogical Implications of This Study**

As you may have noticed in the reading of this dissertation, I have spoken about, and, in many respects, spoken on behalf of CCCC, various critics, ethnic groups, and students. I do this through interpreting and commenting on what people have written about “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” as well as other topics related to speaking on behalf of others, pedagogy, and rhetoric. Like other writers, I am aware that whenever I analyze people’s comments, theories, and actions, people may disagree with the way in which I speak on their behalf. After all, the way in which I speak on someone’s behalf reflects how I render his or her culture, beliefs, traditions, and the like. And what’s more, every time I speak on behalf of someone else, I reiterate the very theme of my study, whether I intend to or not. My dissertation, then, is unavoidably reflexive.

For the past few decades, the theoretical concept of speaking on behalf of others has been theorized and discussed by those in postcolonial theory and Women’s Studies. I designed this dissertation so that people can understand how previous theories on speaking on behalf of others relate to SRTOL. But I also wanted to show how scholars in Rhetoric and Composition might take up the discussion of speaking on behalf of others. I wanted to examine this phenomenon using rhetorical theory, not just postcolonial and feminist theory, so that readers could also see the manner in which I theorized why and how the committee who created SRTOL engaged in this phenomenon.

In writing this dissertation, I realize that the way I speak on behalf of someone often causes me to enter into contact zones with the various scholars I discuss in my text. Mary Louise Pratt defines contact zones as “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each

other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today” (501). I find myself frequently thinking about contact zones in relationship to Royster’s contention that academics cannot study the cultures outside of their own without having “home training.” Home training, as readers will recall, “underscores the reality that point of view matters and that we must be trained to respect points of view other than our own” (Royster 32). In other words, a scholar with home training is going to be aware of the “asymmetrical relations of power” that exist between the researcher and the researched. The scholar-researcher is the one who speaks about, and speaks on behalf of, the people being researched. He or she must be aware of and take into consideration viewpoints that conflict with his or her own. Most importantly, the scholar-researcher must “draw conclusions about others with care” (Royster 33). As the author of this study, I have tried to take Royster’s advice as seriously as others have in my field.

An example of this seriousness can be seen in the work of Ellen Cushman. In her work, *The Struggle and the Tools: Oral and Literate Strategies in the Inner City Community*, Cushman discusses how researchers might (mis)interpret a situation in which Lucy, an African American woman, must provide her daughter’s birth certificate to a social service worker so that her daughter can receive social assistance. Though Lucy knows that she doesn’t have to provide the birth certificate, she nonetheless agrees to provide the documentation. Of this situation, Cushman writes:

Many social and cultural theorists would point to this exchange as convincing evidence of systematic oppression in inner cities, and would paint Lucy in the dull colors of someone who blindly reproduces the social structures that may not be in her best interest. Here, their arguments would leave off—without asking what

happened before or after this public interaction, without seeking the hidden ideologies informing Lucy's statements, without acknowledging the subtle ways in which Lucy bends her language to be both accommodating and challenging. And their convincing discussions leave us with not only an inaccurate portrayal of the overly determined politics of day-to-day life, but worse, a shallow and reduced characterization of Lucy as "disempowered" and unreflective in the face of these politics. (2)

Not only does Cushman point out how theorists have the power to reduce someone to a single term ("disempowered"), but she also points out how they do not understand the culture and the people that they study. Social and cultural theorists, Cushman emphasizes, do not recognize how Lucy manipulates her language to indicate that she understands the power structure she seeks to subtly challenge. Their theories may not take into consideration how Lucy contextualizes "the hidden ideologies" within the situation she finds herself. Cushman, in effect, indicts mainstream social and cultural theorists for mischaracterizing the very people they theorize.

Many critics, beside Cushman, note how people of color are often mischaracterized or misunderstood within major research projects. For example, some critics reviewing Stephen Parks' *Class Politics: The Movement for the Students' Right to Their Own Language* felt that Parks mischaracterized or underestimated the role that African American CCCC members played in the formation of SRTOL. Carmen Kynard points out that the Black Caucus (an affinity group within the CCCC) "both collectively and in terms of individual, historical leaders—has quite forcefully contended that his book erases its presence as well as Geneva Smitherman's work in shaping the politics of CCCC and SRTOL" (361). Kynard then goes on to provide a more thorough history of the Black Caucus and its members' influence on SRTOL and the language

rights movement in general; additionally, she highlights what she liked about Parks discussion of the Student Nonviolence Coordinating Committee, Black Panther Party, Stokely Carmichael, and Geneva Smitherman; however, she also provides additional contexts to understanding the views of these organizations and individuals. While Parks, according to Kynard, focuses on how the aforementioned organizations and individuals addressed class politics, Kynard notes how these organizations and individuals addressed racial politics, something she felt Parks downplayed.

Kynard, especially, takes issue with Parks' interpretation of Geneva Smitherman's essay, "Black Power is Black Language." According to Kynard, Parks interprets the essay as being a complaisant examination of Black Power and a departure "from the radical protests of her time" (367). Kynard, however, believes that Smitherman's essay "functions as almost the quintessential Black Arts Movement piece—written by blacks, for blacks—the sister movement not examined by Parks" (367). Likewise, Keith Gilyard also takes issue with Parks' interpretation of Smitherman's essay. He claims that Smitherman "was reflecting the complexities of Black rhetorical and political engagement" and as an activist from the 1960s, Smitherman was not "going to enter classrooms to glorify violence, which is not, in any event, the litmus test for progressive Black political activities" ("Holdin'" 120). Gilyard, thus challenges Parks' belief in what constitutes black progressivism. Most importantly, Gilyard and Kynard both feel the need to speak about and speak on behalf of African American organizations and scholars. They, in effect, fill in the gaps that they feel Parks left in the book. As Gilyard explains, "The main point to make here, however, is that Parks silences African American scholars" ("Holdin'" 122). Their articles serve as a means of allowing them to talk.

Just as researchers have to take into consideration how they speak about and speak for the people they study, teachers, too, have to take into consideration how they speak on behalf of

others in the classroom. As a teacher, I have encountered students who have dismissed and disregarded the lives of homosexuals or Muslims, and I have defended these and other groups by speaking on their behalf. Though I am not a Muslim and am not a part of the LBGT community, I have used my “power” as a teacher to legitimize (at least, for some) their existence, especially if it looks as if no other student in the room will do so. I have attempted, in the words of Alcoff, to “[represent] the other’s needs, goals, situation, and in fact, *who they are*” (9). Other teachers prefer not to speak on behalf of others, but rather choose to incorporate texts that allow writers to speak about their own cultures. Teachers interested in discussing immigration and assimilation may feel more comfortable incorporating multicultural textbooks and requiring their students to read excerpts from Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* or James Baldwin’s “Stranger in the Village.” However, teachers need also to be aware of the politics of using minority writers from textbooks. As Sandra Jamieson points out, many textbooks that include writers of color often select pieces in which the “writer is still constructed as victim” (166). This could unintentionally cause students to construct people of color as victims in need of saving (Jamieson 166-69). Teachers, then, must show that they have “home training” so that they can select texts that represent the diversity of experiences within various groups.

Thus, it seems that speaking on behalf of others is an inevitable part of academic discourse—evident, say, not only when we represent others in our scholarship but also when we represent others in our classrooms, even though it seems likely that many professors and students may be unaware that they are engaging in speaking on behalf of others. The ways we do this are, no doubt, many, but three practices, in particular, can best illustrate what I mean: the Socratic dialogue, ventriloquizing, and rivaling.



### *Socratic Dialogue*

The Socratic dialogue not only calls for students to provide facts and formulate a position, but it also encourages students to examine the multiple perspectives of a given situation (Cooper 55). According to Linda Elder and Richard Paul, teachers who use Socratic dialogue do so to encourage students to engage in critical thinking. Critical thinking thus calls for “a disciplined ‘executive’ level of thinking, a powerful inner voice of reason, to monitor, access, and reconstitute—in a more rational direction—our thinking, feeling, and action” (298). In other words, critical thinking challenges students to understand how they individually examine a given situation. To this end, Socratic dialogue aids in critical thinking because “it cultivates that inner voice by providing a public model for it” (298). Specifically, Socratic dialogue calls for individuals to engage with others in rigorous dialogue; this engagement allows for individuals to express their “inner voice” and to have their existing inner voices challenged and questioned.

Teachers who use this method often “respond to all answers with a further question” (Elder and Paul 298). Socratic questioning should thus help students—or the respondents—to understand the “foundations for what is said and believed” and help them see the interconnectedness of thoughts (298). Most importantly, Elder and Paul stress, teachers who use Socratic dialogue must make several assumptions regarding the respondent. Teachers must feign ignorance of the respondent’s agenda, background knowledge of the subject, conceptual understanding of the subject, or the respondent’s viewpoint (298-99). Ideally, teachers should not speak for the student, and the best way to assure this is for the teacher not to assume that he or she has more knowledge about the student than the student has about herself. To put this a bit differently, the Socratic teacher must rather, in Royster’s words, use her “home training” strategically, for the ultimate goal is that the student should learn to speak for himself or herself.

However, this pedagogical method does not stop students from speaking on behalf of others. In an example of Socratic dialogue, one student in response to a teacher's question about why people turn to science rather than religion to understand life's origin, says, "Nowadays most people believe that science and religion deal with different things and that scientific questions cannot be answered by religion" (qtd. in Elder and Paul 300). The teacher, however, never questions the student's assumptions. Rather, the teacher replies, "And by the same token, I suppose, we recognize that religious questions cannot be answered by science" (qtd. in Elder and Paul 300). The point is that in this Socratic dialogue, the teacher assumes that "we" all agree with the viewpoint he espouses. The question then becomes who is this *we*? Does this *we* consist of the teacher's own likeminded group—that is, his friends and colleagues who all agree with him? Or the students in this particular class? Or does the *we* constitute the *American society*, a nebulous term that at best aspires to describe and thus speak on behalf of all Americans? The Socratic dialogue, therefore, invites people to not only address the audience (of respondents or the questioner) but also to invoke an audience. In this way, the Socratic dialogue may invite individuals to speak on behalf of others.

Often times those who use the Socratic dialogue for teaching will also simultaneously engage in devil's advocacy. Writes, Boyd McCandless:

The role of Devil's Advocate is to ask as many pointed and embarrassing questions as possible, demanding factual answers to them, with a double goal: first, to arrive at the facts of the case; and second, to force those he questions and who provide him, if they can, with the facts, more clearly to formulate their entire position. As such, the Devil's Advocate plays an intensely useful but unpopular

role. It is also an uncomfortable role for him, as in his heart he is likely to believe strongly in the very thing or things he is attempting to cast in doubt. (149).

As McCandless makes clear, those who engage in devil's advocacy often voice opinions or viewpoints that are contrary to their own. It calls for teachers to not only know how others might view opposing theories, but also speak on behalf of these groups. While some people might assume that the purpose of playing the devil's advocate is to merely provide an opposing viewpoint, the reality is that the devil's advocate helps people understand how their "facts" and "positions" came into being and how the facts and opinions may be flawed. Shimon M. Glick makes clear that teachers "should act as the devil's advocate towards every point of view expressed, forcing students to clarify their thought processes, defend their positions logically, and be able to articulate them" (241). The goal, Glick makes clear, is not to *force* students to change their views. Rather it is to encourage students to *(re)evaluate* their views in light of different perspectives. Ideally, it could do the same for the Socratic teacher. In its best version, the devil's advocate assumes that people can change their minds, that people can be persuaded by rational argument.

And yet, because the devil's advocate approach and the Socratic dialogue often involve intense questioning, those being questioned can sometimes feel humiliated and uncomfortable. This is especially true for people who come from cultures where direct questioning is considered rude. Notice that McCandless acknowledges that the questions associated in the devil's advocate approach are considered "pointed" and "embarrassing." If not done appropriately, L. Amede Obiora notes that the Socratic dialogue can encourage people to engage in "polemics" not "conscientious dialogue" (361). According to Obiora, many law school professors use the Socratic dialogue as means for students to seek the "right answer"; professors, then, end up being

the sources of “truth” (361). Peter Boghossian likewise points out that students engaging in Socratic dialogue with teachers can steer their responses to cater to what they deem their teachers want (3). In this respect, students engaging in Socratic dialogue can end up speaking on behalf of their teachers by attempting to figure out how to voice or parrot their teachers’ point of view. Such questioning is sometimes referred to as catechistic questioning, a term that refers to scripted question and answer formats found in the training of Catholic schoolchildren.

Whether or not teachers use the devil’s advocate or Socratic dialogue approach to teaching, teachers must consider what happens when students try to speak on behalf of each other. Obiora, for example, recounts a story (told by law critic C.K. Worden) of a female law student who wanted to comment on a rape case in her class. When the student “felt the sting of critical incomprehension from her classmates, she abruptly terminated her remarks . . .” only to find a male student trying to “[jump] in to ‘save’ her.” While trying to help a classmate formulate her response may seem like an appropriate thing to do, his attempt to speak on her behalf turned her “richly textured narrative web into depersonalized abstractions of rules and logic” (371). Thus, he may have spoken for her, but he did not speak for her appropriately.

Sometimes when students do speak on their own behalf, they encounter what Royster says she encounters when she occasionally speaks: disbelief or silence from the audience. Victor Villanueva alludes to this issue in his essay on racism within the academy. He points out how students of color feel when they do speak and are simultaneously not heard in the classroom. “She [a South Asian student] speaks about the difference between speaking and being heard, that if one is constantly speaking but is never heard, never truly heard, there is, in effect, silence, a silencing” (837). In other words, this student, who has an opportunity to, in the words of Alcoff, represent her own “needs, goals, and situation, and in fact, *who [she] is*” can speak for herself.

But the irony is that sometimes without an acknowledgement from the audience, the person who does speak for herself may not feel that she is believed or at least recognized. Royster and Spivak may even say that this person is “Othered.”

As a teacher, I am mindful of how I encourage students to express themselves. And, as I conclude this dissertation, I am becoming even more mindful of how I approach speaking on behalf of others in the classroom. I never thought about how the summation and collection of research constitute a re-presentation of other researchers and subject matters. And I certainly never considered how to approach the ethical issues of speaking on behalf of others with my students.

Assuming that our students will be in the workforce, we also have to assume that they will have to write to, for, and about multiple audiences. For example, we may teach future political leaders who will speak on behalf of the constituents they represent. We may teach future fundraisers who will speak for the organization where they work and the people who benefit from the organization; and we may teach future religious leaders who will speak for their congregation and the people who belong to their religion. Our students, then, must be cognizant of how they render themselves and how they render others.

### *Ventriloquism*

It is not unusual for teachers to ask students to imagine living another person’s life or adopting another person’s values and traditions. Teachers, after all, do this to help students understand perspectives that students might not have considered. When students begin reimagining themselves as someone else, they begin the process of speaking on behalf of others. Why? Because students must consider how another person *might* feel about a situation or why a

culture *might* engage in a specific ritual. When students try on the perspective of another culture or as a different person, and do so using language, they engage in a kind of ventriloquism.

Deborah Tannon defines ventriloquism as a “phenomenon in which a person not only speaks *for* another but *as* another” (55).

We can find examples of students being ask to engage in ventriloquism in textbooks. In *Reading the World: Ideas That Matter*, Michael Austin asks students to do the following:

Write a pacifist response to Orwell. Construct an argument for pacifism’s morality, even in the face of unwarranted aggression. (Austin 287)

In this exercise, students not only must adopt the ideology and terminology of pacifists, but they also have to act as if they themselves are pacifists; to do the assignment well, they must construct “a pacifist response to Orwell.” In other words, they need to read George Orwell’s “Pacifism and the War” and write *to* Orwell. As a pacifist, they have to articulate the attitudes of pacifists and the goals of pacifism.

While Austin seeks to have students write an article from the viewpoint of a general adherence to a specific ideology, David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky seek to have students write as specific writers. In one example found in the eighth edition of *Ways of Reading: An Anthology of Writers*, the editors request that students compose “a dialogue” between Richard Rodriguez and Paulo Freire:

Write a dialogue between the two in which they discuss what Rodriguez has written in “The Achievement of Desire.” What would they say to each other? What questions would they ask? How would they respond to each other conversation? (Barthalamae and Petrosky 257).

Students, thus, must understand the philosophies both writers hold in regards to education and culture. Most importantly, they must pretend to be Rodriguez and Freire. To be Freire and Rodriguez, students have to adopt the writing styles of both writers. Students have to note the length of the writers' sentences; the ways in which the writers express pathos; and reoccurring words, metaphors, or images used. Though the editors indicate that the assignment does not call for the authors to debate each other, students have to consider the ways in which the writers *might* agree and disagree with each other and imagine how the writers would voice their concerns in a question and answer format. The students, thus, speak on behalf of Rodriguez and Freire by pretending *to be* both authors.

There are some advantages of asking a student to engage in ventriloquism. A student who pretends to be Freire and Rodriguez has to engage in critical reading, research, and thinking. He or she must read and re-read the authors' writings; additionally, the student may find it valuable to read other articles and books written by and about Freire and Rodriguez in order to get a complete understanding of their philosophies and how their philosophies have developed over time. The student then has to consider what philosophies or ideas Freire and Rodriguez would emphasize or deemphasize in their conversations with each other. Likewise, the student has to think about how the writers would rhetorically communicate and respond to each other. How would both writers develop their arguments in a conversation?

Teachers using the ventriloquism method also need to be mindful of the disadvantages. For example, students required to write an essay about pacifism may inadvertently engage in the essentialization of pacifists. Who are pacifists and what does it mean to practice pacifism? A student might adopt the definition of a pacifist as discussed by Ralph Albertson in his 1940 article "Who is a Pacifist?" A pacifist, according to Albertson, is "a person who under no

circumstances will fight” (155). He then discusses “true pacifists,” those who “would turn the other cheek not only once but always. They would not fight for their homes nor for their women nor for their children” (155). This belief that a pacifist would not engage in any aggression is not only a mischaracterization, but it is also a stereotype. If you notice, Albertson discusses a “true pacifist”; thus, he hints that there are other types of pacifists, though he does not give these other pacifists formal names or titles. David Clough, however, does. He notes that strategic pacifists are against violence, but also acknowledge that violence may be necessary for defending communities and individuals (375); classical pacifists believe that “limited force in restraining evil” should be used, especially in peacekeeping missions (376-77); universal pacifists believe that everyone, regardless of class, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, et cetera, should adopt pacifism, while communal pacifists believe that individual groups should adopt pacifism, but should not make that a requirement for people in the larger society (378). Thus, the idea that all pacifists believe in nonviolence “even in the fact of unwarranted aggression” (Austin 287) as Michael Austin concludes is simply not supported in fact.

Therefore, it is important for teachers who ask students to adopt an ideological position within a paper to make sure that students understand the complexity of the ideological position they are asked to voice; additionally, it is important that teachers who ask students to adopt the persona of a writer make sure that the student understands the writer’s life and works. Because ventriloquism requires that students speak on behalf of others and as others, students need to make certain that they do not simplify the experiences and philosophies of people.

### *Rivaling*



As teachers we need to consider techniques that will allow students to speak for themselves and also recognize how they speak for others. One technique teachers could use to help students understand how to speak for themselves and for others is rivaling (also referred to as the rival hypothesis stance). Linda Flower, Elenore Long, and Lorraine Higgins describe rivaling as “an important literate practice in which people explore open questions through an analysis of multiple perspectives and evidence” (4). Like the Socratic dialogue, this pedagogical tool focuses on using questions as a means of exploring a given topic. After developing open questions, students then create rival hypotheses, and later reach conclusions about a given situation (Flower and Long, “Tracking” 86). As students engage in the rivaling process, they speak on behalf of others by not only imagining how different individuals or groups of people might interpret issues or situations, but also imagining how readers might react to the text.

At the beginning stage of rivaling, a student formulates an open question. An open question, Lorraine Higgins explains, is one that “cannot be resolved by available ‘facts’ alone but will require further deliberation.” Most importantly, these “open questions call for contingent responses and working hypotheses” (97). In other words, an open question is one that cannot be answered simply. Open questions do not lend themselves to simple “yes or no” answers, nor do they lend themselves to the “either for or against” type of responses. They are designed to be complex and nuanced.

The open question then gives way to the rival hypothesis stance. Because the rival hypothesis stance encourages students to develop multiple perspectives on a given subject, students engage in “questioning [their] own or another author’s assumptions, assessing evidence, adding new information that sheds light on a position, or coming up with alternative explanations” (Higgins 100). As students analyze text and engage in the research process, they

begin to come to their own conclusions about the writer, the text, the subject, and the like.

Students, thus, begin the process of speaking on behalf of others; after all, students must consider how they speak about the writers they use, address the various viewpoints others might have towards the subject, and imagine and/or address the various audiences who might read their work.

As an example of showing how the rival hypothesis stance works, Long, et.al., asks readers to imagine being an African American teen who attends a school where illicit drugs are readily available. As a teen, the reader notices ineffectual brochures that encourage people “to just say no” to drugs. The reader has an opportunity to participate in a literacy program at the Community Literacy Center where the reader and his or her peers have an opportunity to work with college students to create drug education brochures that are more effective and more relatable to the target audiences. To do this, the reader works with a mentor and both engage in rivaling. Sometimes the rivaling takes on the form of Socratic dialogue where the mentor asks the reader questions that will help the reader consider how he or she approaches the topic. Sometimes, the rivaling calls for the mentor or reader to explicitly speak for or as someone affected by drugs. The point here is that the rival hypothesis stance calls for the reader to understand his or her viewpoints and the viewpoints of others. Until the reader has an opportunity to meet and interview a drug user, a drug counselor, or a police officer, the reader must imagine and in some respects, speak for, these and other groups as the reader creates the brochure. Most importantly, the reader has to imagine how groups of people might interpret, agree, or disagree with what is written (Long, et.al “Rivaling” 229-30).

As Flower makes clear, rivaling is a part of intercultural inquiry. In her article, “Intercultural Inquiry and the Transformation of Service,” Linda Flower uses a figure of a table

and chairs to illustrate how intercultural inquiry and rivaling work. “Intercultural inquiry is not a study *of* others, but a collaborative inquiry *with* others into shared, mutually significant questions. It seeks the grounds for understanding and action in alternative readings of the world, based on diverse racial, social, cultural, class, and gendered experiences” (189). Thus, intercultural inquiry encourages people to speak to and with, not solely speak on behalf, of others.

Just as teachers need to consider the pedagogical methods they use to speak on behalf of others, students should also consider how they speak on behalf of others and the implications for doing so. The next section will help teachers develop activities and assignments that help students explore how people, including themselves, engage in speaking on behalf of others.

### **A Pedagogical Strategy for Speaking on Behalf of Others**

By the time our students have entered college, most have been exposed to the multiple ways in which people speak on behalf of others. However, many students have not thought about the implications of speaking on behalf of others. The purpose of this pedagogy is to help students think about the power dynamics of speaking on behalf of others. As Alcoff has said, and as my dissertation has shown, “the rituals of speaking” involve understanding the dynamics of who gets to speak on behalf of others and who does not; who gets silenced and who has the opportunity to listen; and who is the subject of the discourse and who is allowed to respond to the discourse (15-18).

The first activity is inspired by Linda Alcoff. For those interested in incorporating the activity within their pedagogy, I would suggest you read “The Problem of Speaking for Others.”

This activity relates to her section on elected representatives and the ways in which they are authorized to speak on behalf of others.

*Activity One: Spokesperson*

This is an exercise which calls on students to perform two main activities. One, students must work in groups and engage in class discussion; two, students must individually write about their thoughts on speaking on behalf of others. The goal is for students to reflect on the ways in which they speak on behalf of others and the ways in which others speak on behalf of them.

In the first part of the exercise, teachers should either ask students to think about an issue that students would want to debate or bring an issue up for discussion. Teachers, then, put the students into groups and request that students note the commonalities and points of difference they have in regards to the issue. All groups then select a spokesperson who is responsible for articulating the views of the group.

As a teacher, I prefer to have students watch a controversial video or read a short news article. Let's suppose that I've had my students read "Arts of the Contact Zone" by Mary Louise Pratt. I then have them read an article about NewSouth Book's decision to remove the word "nigger" in its publication of Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*; and finally, have my students watch an excerpt from *60 Minutes* regarding the issue. After having a class discussion on how Pratt's theories on the contact zone relate to the controversy, I can put my students into groups and request that certain groups come up with explanations as to why the removal of the word is necessary and other groups explain why the removal of the word is unwise. After each group selects a spokesperson, I then request that that the spokesperson work with his or her group to

present opening “arguments” for the next class period (assuming my class is fifty minutes to an hour and fifteen minutes long).

During the next class period, each spokesperson would have three to five minutes to explain the group’s position. After each spokesperson has communicated his or her position, the teacher and other spokespersons ask questions and make comments regarding their positions. (Group members would not be allowed to answer or ask questions in this particular instance.) When the teacher is ready to end discussion, the teacher can then request spokespersons to write down how they felt about the way in which they represented the group. Likewise, group members also write down how they felt the spokesperson represented them.

After this exercise, it’s important to discuss how students felt as spokespersons and as people who were represented. In order to deepen the students’ awareness of speaking on behalf of others, I present them with the following heuristic. Questions include the following:

1. Everyone: How did you all decide who would be spokesperson for your group?
2. Everyone: What are the desirable characteristics of a spokesperson?
3. Group members: Were there times in which you wanted to interject? If so, when? What would you have said?
4. Group members: Because you were not allowed to speak, did you feel silenced? If so, what did that feel like? If you didn’t feel silenced, why not?
5. Group members: Did your spokesperson say something that you disagreed with? If so, what was it?
6. Group members: Did you spokesperson not emphasize something you felt should have been emphasized. If so, what was it?

7. Spokespersons: What are some issues that arise from having to speak for everyone in the group?
8. Spokespersons: Listening to the conversations about what your group members or other group members would have said, what would you do or say differently as spokesperson?

Of course, there are other questions that can be asked. Going back to my example, I would ask students to relate this activity to Pratt's discussion of the contact zone. Other teachers may find that the activity could be used to discuss readings in which an author, such as Malcolm X or Gloria Steinem, is considered a spokesperson for an organization or a movement.

The second part of the assignment includes a short writing exercise in which students discuss what it was like to be a group member or spokesperson. If you are a teacher who likes to give students a question as part of the writing prompt, some questions you can consider: What are the positive and negative implications of being a spokesperson for a group? How would you describe the power dynamics between the spokesperson and group? What did this exercise teach you about speaking on behalf of others?

The questions for the writing prompt as well as the questions used for the in-class activity directly relate to Alcoff's rituals of speaking. To remind, Alcoff says, "the rituals of speaking that involve the location of the speaker and listeners affect whether a claim is taken as a true, well-reasoned, compelling argument or a significant idea" (13). If you notice, my questions deal with the "location of the speaker and listener": I ask students to discuss how they decided who would be the spokesperson and who would not; I ask my students to discuss the "truth" of the claims presented. I also asked my students to describe their feelings regarding how well they felt their representative or spokesperson described their "situation and wishes" (Alcoff 10). In many respects I am introducing Alcoff's ideas regarding the concept of speaking on behalf of others as

encompassing speaking about others and speaking for others, though I may not be explicitly discussing her text.

Activity two can be used in conjunction with activity one or it can be a separate activity. Activity two calls for students to analyze speeches. Teachers can decide to explicitly discuss how Alcoff's concept of speaking about and speaking for others is manifested in a selected speech; others may decide that they want to use Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" to discuss the concept of representation and re-presentation within a speech. As I have shown in the dissertation, speaking about and speaking for directly relates to re-presentation and representation. Spivak, in fact, notes that "representation" means "speaking for" and "re-presentation" relates to a type of portrayal or speaking about "as in art or philosophy" ("Subaltern" 275). When reading activity two, please note that I have created the activity and the questions to reflect concepts by Alcoff and Spivak.

#### *Activity Two: Analyzing Speeches*

If you are a teacher who incorporates public speaking or teaches texts based on speeches, then this assignment might be useful for helping students understand Alcoff's discussion of speaking about someone and speaking for someone. For such an activity, I would suggest either Jacqueline Jones Royster's "When the First Voice You Hear is Not Your Own" or Barack Obama's 2008 "A More Perfect Union" speech. For the sake of argument, let's say that I have selected Obama's speech. Here Obama addresses the criticism of his former minister, Reverend Jeremiah Wright, who was accused of being anti-American when his sermon about the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States had been released. In this speech, Obama speaks about and for various individuals and groups of people: Americans, his campaign staff,

Jeremiah Wright, African Americans, and middle and working class white Americans who feel disempowered due to affirmative action and economic recession.

In the process of analyzing this speech, teachers can help students engage with Spivak's concept of representation and re-representation. Teachers should ask students to pay particular attention to when Obama speaks "as an African American" and when he does not; when Obama speaks as a member of Jeremiah Wright's church and when he does not. Likewise, teachers can help students see when Obama re-presents various communities and individuals and when he represents them. Questions that will help students explore speaking on behalf of others:

1. How does Barack Obama represent and re-present the United States?
2. How do you think Barack Obama represents and re-presents Trinity United Church of Christ, his former church?
3. Are there parts of the speech with which you think African Americans might disagree?
4. Are there parts of the speech with which you think white Americans might disagree?
5. In what ways have you spoken about and for African Americans and white Americans in your discussion? In what ways have you spoken as a representative of African Americans or white Americans? In what ways have you re-presented the groups?

Question five is important because it encourages the students to engage in metacognition. They have to think about the ways in which they have just engaged in re-representation and representation. Likewise, they also have to think about the ways in which they have spoken about and for others. This type of metacognition is advocated by Alcoff. She writes that "anyone who speaks for others should only do so out of a concrete analysis of the particular power relations and discourse effects involved" (24). In other words, people need to be aware of how they speak on behalf of others and the power they exhibit by speaking on behalf of others.



A good follow-up writing and research assignment, then, would be for students to analyze Obama's speech according to the Spivak's concepts of re-presentation and representation as well as Alcoff's concepts of speaking for and about others. To aid in the analysis, students should research reactions individuals had towards the speech, especially in regards to the sections where students see Obama engaging in re-presentation and representation. This will help students understand how people react to being spoken about and spoken for and help them understand the dynamics of speaking for and about others.

I hope that these pedagogical activities will spur readers, especially teachers in Rhetoric and Composition, to consider how they can explicitly discuss the rhetorical ways in which writers and speakers speak on behalf of others. Readers will notice that my dissertation is an elaborate exercise on how one could examine "Students Rights' to Their Own Language" from a rhetorical perspective. Not only do I use feminist and post-colonial theories to analyze SRTOL, but I also incorporate Lloyd Bitzer's theory of the rhetorical situation. I want to show how the speakers, within a rhetorical situation, often speak on behalf of others, especially when addressing exigencies. Additionally, I want to show how speakers will link themselves with the rhetorical audience to speak on behalf of the rhetorical audience and themselves. During the entire process, speakers think about the constraints as they prepare their speeches and activities to address the exigence.

Readers may also notice that within the pedagogical activities, I did not incorporate Lloyd Bitzer, nor did I require the students to read the actual texts from Alcoff, Spivak, or Royster. The reason for not initially incorporating Bitzer is that Bitzer does not explicitly discuss speaking on behalf of others. To incorporate Bitzer within the situation may confuse students who are learning the concept of speaking on behalf of others for the first time.

Now, Alcoff and Spivak do explicitly discuss speaking on behalf of others.

Unfortunately, the texts by Alcoff and Spivak are difficult for undergraduates (and some graduate students) to understand. To require some undergraduates to read both writers might be too frustrating for them, depending on the class. This is why I encourage teachers to use the writers as “inspiration” for class activities, discussions, and assignments. After all, teachers can apply the ideas of Bitzer, Royster, Alcoff, and Spivak to the writing classroom without asking students to read their primary texts.

### **Final Thoughts on SRTOL**

For those who seek to teach or to analyze better “Students’ Right to Their Own Language,” I hope that this dissertation has provided additional ideas on how to rhetorically approach SRTOL. Likewise, I hope that the sample pedagogical unit may inspire readers to see other ways of not only teaching SRTOL but also of analyzing other texts.

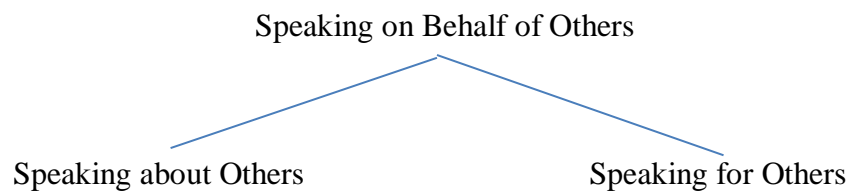
I have used CCCC’s “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” as an example of how a complex and multifaceted organization such as the Conference on College Composition and Communication speaks on behalf of others. As seen throughout the dissertation, some members of CCCC’s audience did not feel that the document adequately represented their pedagogical beliefs. Others, however, did.

It is important that those in Rhetoric and Composition examine speaking on behalf of others not just from a feminist and postcolonial perspective, but also from a rhetorical perspective. Using Lloyd Bitzer’s rhetorical situation allows researchers to consider how rhetors, audiences, and rhetorical audiences speak on behalf of others throughout the rhetorical situation, as is seen in my study. Most importantly, researchers should examine how constraints

and exigencies affect how people speak on behalf of others. During the process of creating SRTOL, the CCCC continually thought about their exigencies, their audiences, and their constraints.

Though the CCCC is clearly an organization that is a part of the National Council for the Teachers of English, it is, nonetheless, an organization that caters to college teachers, not necessarily teachers who work mostly with secondary and primary students. Part of me wonders if the document would have been stronger had the organization solely addressed issues affecting college students in writing classrooms, rather than those in primary and secondary schools. Part of me wonders, too, if the document would have been stronger if it had focused on specific instances—such as the establishment of the English Standard schools in Hawaii and the boarding schools for Native Americans—of how the government on federal, state, and local levels penalized students for the language and dialects they spoke. Part of me also wonders about the role students played in the shaping of SRTOL. In my research, I was not able to find written evidence of CCCC acknowledging students who helped shaped the SRTOL document. Would students have deemphasized or emphasized certain sections within the document? This is certainly a question that could be asked by teachers who teach SRTOL in their classroom, and one reason I include a pedagogical application here is to glean some insight, however limited, into how students think about the problem of speaking on behalf of others.

At the beginning of the dissertation, I noted that speaking on behalf of others can look like this:



This illustration, however, does not cover what happens when a speaker speaks with others not on behalf of them. Additionally, it does not cover what happens when a speaker, conscious of the concept of speaking on behalf of others, attempts to allow the “others” to speak for themselves.

As scholars and researchers, though, how might we academics and our professional organizations allow for research subjects to speak for themselves? In addition to some academics establishing their own positionality (by acknowledging their race, gender, educational attainment, et cetera) some incorporate first person written accounts and/or interviews with the interviewees within their research or formal documents. Others invite research subjects to read what is written and provide feedback or commentary. A few even encourage research subjects to co-present papers at conferences with them. The point is that there are academicians who are aware of the issues inherent with speaking on behalf of others, and they do what they can to incorporate other voices and make sure that these voices are heard. The hope, however, is that these writers who engage in the creation of multi-vocal texts understand how they as writers have the power to shape the texts and also have the opportunity to engage in the misrepresentation of the voices they incorporate and the subject matter discussed (Kirsch, “Multi-Vocal” 193-95).

And yet, as my dissertation shows, there are many in the academy who do not think about how they speak on others’ behalf. When SRTOL came out, respondents wrote articles claiming that they either knew what African Americans and/or African American students thought of the document or what these groups should think about the document. Sometimes, respondents wrote about how they, as teachers, felt about the document; and, using their own feelings, the respondents concluded that other teachers felt the same way—the exception being the committee who created SRTOL, or the people against SRTOL. A few respondents engaged in labeling (e.g.

“traditionalists” or “radicals”) those who didn’t agree with them. This labeling allowed for them to speak about others in such a way that Linda Alcoff would conclude that these respondents were speaking on behalf of them.

SRTOL is a document created by a committee in which members had to negotiate with each other about what would be included and excluded and emphasized and deemphasized (Smitherman, “Retrospective” 24). Though I personally consider SRTOL to be a not-exactly-perfect document, I do consider it to be a valuable document. SRTOL is centered on the ideals of an educational system that upholds rather than ridicules groups and the dialects they use. It is centered on the belief that teachers should understand how to work lovingly and respectfully with linguistically diverse students, whether it is an Appalachian speaker or a second language learner. It is centered on the belief that language—dialects included—is valuable for communication, creativity, and the conscious or unconscious spiritual connection that is obtained between those who speak to each other—whether speakers choose to speak to each other in standard English or Castilian Spanish, AAEV or Hawaiian Creole.

Just as SRTOL challenges teachers to confront their own prejudices regarding dialects, this dissertation challenges researchers, teachers, and others to confront the ethical (and perhaps) unethical ways in which we speak on behalf of others. By doing this, we will understand better how to communicate with others, not just for others.

## Notes

**Introduction**

<sup>1</sup> While I recognize that some linguists assert that standard English is an abstract concept that is difficult to define, I do recognize that many Americans believe in the concreteness of standard English. Thus, I use the term “standard English” much in the same way that Walt Wolfram and Natalie Schilling-Estes use the term. They say that formal standard English “tends to be based on the written language of established writers and is typically codified in English grammar texts. It is perpetuated to a large extent in formal institutions, such as schools, by those responsible for English language education” (10). In contrast, informal standard English, is subjective and is based on a community’s mutual understanding of what constitutes “good” English and “bad” English. Thus, informal standard English is “a variety [of English] free of stigmatized features” (13).

<sup>2</sup> There are three different publications of “Students’ Right to Their Own Language,” which I will discuss in upcoming chapters. Unless otherwise stated I will use the version published in *College English*.

<sup>3</sup> As you read this study, you will see that my definition is influenced by my understanding of Linda Alcoff and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.

**Chapter One**

<sup>4</sup> Please note that the person or group who is spoken on behalf of may not necessarily approve of the person who speaks on behalf of them. That issue will be addressed in subsequent chapters.

<sup>5</sup> The irony is not lost on me that I’m speaking about others now.

<sup>6</sup> The essay is written in parts clearly identifying the author who is writing each part.

<sup>7</sup> Apart from the problem of academic Othering, and in addition to the contributions of Alcoff and Spivak, Othering is a central theme in postcolonial discourses, probably owing to the wide influence of Edward Said’s *Orientalism*. Of course, Othering routinely occurs in situations outside of theoretical and academic contexts. For example, during the 2012 Republican primary, Newt Gingrich told people in New Hampshire that “If the N.A.A.C.P. invites me, I’ll go to their convention, talk about why the African-American community should demand paychecks and not be satisfied with food stamps” (qtd. in Gabriel). His words represent a distorted description and interpretation of the African American community. He assumes that African Americans do not advocate for jobs; the implicit assumption is that white and perhaps other groups of Americans do.

<sup>8</sup> In a different context, Frank Farmer suggests as a rule for how to respond to overheard (or overread) characterizations: “Every representation of us is,” Farmer suggests, ought to be regarded as “an address to us.” We should operate on the premise “that every word spoken about us is a word spoken to us” even if it is not (626). Though the “us” in Farmer’s usage refers to the

discipline of Rhetoric and Composition, the “us” in the example of Royster refers to African American culture.

<sup>9</sup> The concept of “voice” in Rhetoric and Composition is a controversial one; the idea that there is an “authentic voice” has been discredited by some scholars, though some who focus on culture and gender still find the concept of voice useful when discussing certain identities. See Darsie Bowden’s *The Mythology of Voice*.

<sup>10</sup> This excerpt is reminiscent of Alcoff’s discussion of truth and essentialism. Alcoff reminds the reader that the social identity of a speaker is not fixed but multidimensional. Thus, the audience should recognize that how a speaker or writer communicates on behalf of others depends on the social identity or social location of the writer at a certain point in time (Alcoff 16-17).

<sup>11</sup> Spivak has since regretted promoting strategic essentialism and has since “given up on it” (Danius, Jonsson, and Spivak 35). As she states, “. . . my notion just simply became the union ticket for essentialism. As in what it meant by strategy, no one worried about that” (Danius, Jonsson, Spivak 35).

<sup>12</sup> Though my discussion of silencing encompasses the idea of an individual or group who is silenced by another, there are times when individuals or groups decide to exercise silence as a means of agency. Thomas Huckin’s “On Textual Silences, Large and Small” discusses how and why rhetors use silence.

<sup>13</sup> An example of this is seen with Gramsci’s use of the word “subaltern.” Marcus Green notes that there are scholars (including Spivak) who believe that Gramsci used “subaltern” rather than “proletariat” so as not to arouse anger against Italian fascists who had imprisoned him for his Marxist beliefs. In fact, Green quotes Spivak as saying, “Gramsci used [the term *subaltern*] because Gramsci was obliged to censor himself in prison” (qtd. in Green 390). Green disagrees with Spivak and others who claim that Gramsci uses *subaltern* as opposed to *proletariat* as a means of “censoring himself” from prison officials (392-93).

<sup>14</sup> Thus, it seems that intellectuals are interested in essentializing the Other.

<sup>15</sup> In her discussion, Royster cites Barbara Christian’s article “The Race for Theory,” which discusses academia’s preference for the “Western form of abstract logic” (52) and the need philosophers have for using language that “mystifies rather than clarifies,” thus making it difficult for general readers to understand what is being written (55).

## Chapter Two

<sup>16</sup> According to Stephen Parks, the 1972 Executive Committee of the CCCC changed the rules regarding what constituted a quorum. Originally a quorum consisted of 100 voting members. That was changed to 50 voting members (168).

<sup>17</sup> A copy-reader is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “one who reads copy for a newspaper or a book.”

<sup>18</sup> Fusing both African American English Vernacular and EAE is something Geneva Smitherman and Keith Gilyard have utilized in their academic works.

### Chapter Three

<sup>19</sup> According to Jennifer C. Nash, intersectionality within legal studies focuses on “multidimensionality” and the “notion that subjectivity is constituted by mutually reinforcing vectors of race, gender, class, and sexuality” (2).

<sup>20</sup> I want to thank University of Illinois Archives for providing me a copy of the unpublished Commission on Language’s “Statement on Usage” report. This report can be found at the NCTE Archives Holdings at the University of Illinois.

<sup>21</sup> In her work *Writing Genres*, Amy J. Devitt discusses the importance of genre variations in her chapter entitled “A Study of Genres in Context.”

### Chapter Four

<sup>22</sup> As readers will see, I address a number of ways an actual audience can respond (or not) within a rhetorical situation. Though Bitzer’s rhetorical audience responds to the information, it must respond to the information in a certain way—that is the rhetorical audience must engage in the positive modification of an exigence.

<sup>23</sup> On the SUNY Fredonia Web site, Susan Spangler provides a pedagogical activity which helps students understand how the audience addressed and audience invoked theories can lead to stereotyping and essentializing.

<sup>24</sup> Walter Ong also discusses the use of demonstrative words and certain phrases such as “Once upon a time” and “Dear reader” in invoking audiences (10-17).

<sup>25</sup> All italicized words indicate changes from the original text.

<sup>26</sup> It is worth noting that “Student’s Right to His Own Language” is now degendered so that it reads “Students’ Right to Their Own Language.”

<sup>27</sup> I examined various databases to locate articles including the *New York Times*, *ProQuest*, and *NewsBank*. While I did find additional articles on SRTOL, one mentioned it as a part of a conference on English and another on the history of teaching grammar in the classroom.

<sup>28</sup> Now, I want to make clear that Bloom is not advocating against SRTOL. Rather, she acknowledges that composition teachers are expected by the colleagues in English departments and by their administrators in the university to emphasize the importance of standard English over the significance of dialectical and non-Western rhetorical usage found in the works of



writers such as Langston Hughes, Gloria Anzaldúa, and the like who, it seems, are permitted a flexibility with dialects that our students do not enjoy (Bloom 669-672).

## **Chapter 5**

<sup>29</sup> Bitzer defines the rhetorical situation as “a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed, if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about significant modification of the exigence” (“Rhetorical” 6).

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